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No. 96.

THE SNOW.

BY IDALIA.

Softly, airily falls the snow,
Its soft flakes floating calm and slow
From the dull, gray sky to the earth below.
Swifter and swifter the great stars fall
Till the cold, pure veil is over all,
And familiar scenes, in mystic white,
Gleam ghastly strange in the shimmering light.
Oh, the snow, the snow, the beautiful snow!
Calmly it floats from its home on high,
Through the frosty air from the clouded sky
To rest on the earth below.
Laughing and shouting, wild with glee,
Bright eyes dancing the snow to see,
The little ones welcome it merrily.
In frolicsome sport the snowballs fly,
And ready are all the sleds to try
In famous coasting down the steep hill,
Stretching before them so calm and still.
Oh, the snow, the snow, the merry white snow!
Coming to earth in a dizzy dance,
As a light breeze gives it another chance
In a last quick whirl to go.
Thinly wrapped in her ragged shawl,
A poor child weeps as star-flakes fall,
And the cold, white snow gathers over all.
Now Winter has come with cold and sleet,
Bitter indeed to little bare feet.
Ah, Poverty's child well knows 'tis sad
To those half-sheltered and poorly clad!
Oh, the snow, the snow, the pitiless snow!
Paying no heed to the helpless cry,
The flaking step or the tearful eye,
But seeming to mock at woe.
A young girl, from her casement high,
Looks up at the lowering sky,
And smiles as still swifter the snow-flakes fly.
In castle-building she seems to hear
The merry music of bells draw near,
And laughs as she fancies how swift and light
The sleighs will glide o'er the road to-night.
Oh, the snow, the crystalline, dazzling snow!
How it will glimmer, and glitter, and gleam
When the moon shall cast a ling'ring beam
On the fun and mirth below.
One whose black robe and tearful eye
Tell of her grief, watches the sky,
And moans as she utters the mournful cry:
"Only a week since our home, so sad,
With baby-prattle and glee was glad;
And there was the patter of little feet,
Music to mother-heart ever sweet.
Oh, the snow, the awful and solemn snow!
Each icy flake on my heart doth fall,
For it is spreading its dead-white pall
On my darling's grave, I know."
An aged man, with heavy sigh,
Murmurs, "I'll lay me down to die,
And the snow will cover me by and by.
It comes so fast that it blinds my sight;
I have lost the road, but feel to-night
That life's sad journey is near its close.
The snow shall cover me when day glows.
Oh, the snow, the plying, whel'ring snow!
It shall spread o'er me its mantle white,
And hide from the cold world's scornful sight
My misery, sin and woe."
A poor girl walks through cold and sleet,
From daisy toll, through dark'ning street,
To the only welcome she'll ever meet:
A fireless garret, a crust of bread,
And barely a shelter for her head.
"Ah, me," she sighs, "for the blessed rest
Of those who sleep on the Savior's breast!
Yet, patience! The snow is white, innocent snow—
When another winter shall have come,
And I am safe in my last long home,
Will cover my grave below."
Calmly, steadily falls the snow,
From distant sky to earth below,
Alone on the scenes of mirth and woe,
Alone it has come to happy and sad,
Alone to the rich and the poor clad.
It has danced and whirled through frosty air,
Or floated down calm, serene and fair!
Oh, the strange impartial, passionless snow!
At night the moonbeams shall softly gleam
On Earth, asleep in a still white dream,
Wrapped in its mystic glow.

Julia's Peril:

OR,

THE WIFE'S VICTORY.

A STORY OF LOVE, FOLLY, AND REPENTANCE.

BY BARTLEY T. CAMPBELL,
AUTHOR OF "IN THE WIND," "OUT IN THE WORLD,"
ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER V. JOHN NEVIN.

A JUNE sun is setting, round and red, behind the Highlands of the Hudson, and the mighty river, with its majestic sweep, is wrapt in sombre shadows, only the highest cliffs catching the reflected radiance of the bright-lued clouds which drift everywhere, from horizon to zenith, like crimson and gold fantasies through a land of enchantment.
Oak Manor, standing as it does on one of the highest knobs, still basks in the light, and Alice Houston and Mabel Lynn are walking up and down the broad piazza, arm in arm.
Two years have passed since Mabel first came to Oak Manor, and these two years have done much for her. She has grown round and plump, and, perhaps, three inches taller, giving her form a lithe, though womanly appearance; and, while Alice is dark and radiantly beautiful, Mabel is all tenderness and sweetness. Her hair is possibly a darker shade of gold, but it is gold still, fine, glossy gold, such as pearls might have tucked up with crystal combs in Oriental caves, ere Tom Moore's pious maid known their beauty to the world.
Life has been very pleasant to her since the date of her adoption by Captain Houston, and she and Alice have learned to love each other very dearly.
They are talking now of their projected trip to Newport, and planning little excursions among the Highlands, after they come home.
"You have never seen the sea, Mabel?" exclaimed Alice; "but when you do, you will just go wild over it. The white sandy beach, and the great green waves. Oh, it is so beautiful."
"But, not half so beautiful as Mabel's self," said a voice close behind the girls, and turning, they met the gaze of Captain Houston. By his side stood a gentleman of thirty-three, or thereabouts. An exceedingly stylish and handsome man he was, although



Laura turned deathly pale, and trembled like an aspen. "It's Gilbert Rook," she said.

his face was burned with tropic suns, and there was a certain air about him that had a tendency to make him look grave, or sad, or both.

"Alice, can you guess who this is?" asked the captain.
"No, sir," darting a quick glance upward, and then dropping her eyes again, her face suffused with blushes.
The stranger smiled, and Mabel thought she never had seen as handsome a man in her whole life before.

"This, then, is John Nevin," said the captain, with a chuckle, and evidently enjoying his daughter's embarrassment.
She was about to rush to his arms, but when she looked up into his earnest eyes, she restrained herself, and said, simply:

"Cousin John, you are welcome to Oak Manor."

They shook hands; but, notwithstanding, the reception was a little cool, when it is remembered that these two were betrothed to each other. But John Nevin did not seem to expect any thing more, and he simply said in return:

"Thank you! I'll try and deserve your welcome."
Mabel was then introduced by Captain Houston to the stranger, and the latter, after looking at her for a moment, said, in his usual grave way:

"Miss Lynn, I have surely seen you somewhere before, or at least, somebody who resembles you a great deal. Ah, yes! I remember now; you are the very image of a dear friend whom I met and was intimate with in Europe—Laura Robsart. Did you ever know a lady of that name?"

"No, I never knew a lady of that name," answered Mabel, smiling a little.
John Nevin did not smile in return, but bit his lip, and muttered to himself: "How like she is to Laura—how very like!"

Then he proposed a stroll in the grove; the girls accepted, and for the next hour John Nevin regaled them with his European experiences. He told them of his trip up the Rhine; of Erbach and Darmstadt; of Cologne and Strasbourg; of picture-galleries and old cathedrals.
His voice was deep and earnest, and though it was of but the most trivial matter he spoke, the calm dignity of his words made his auditors all attention.

"It was at Rheims I first met Laura Robsart," he said, "whom I have already spoken of as the counterpart of Miss Mabel here. We traveled in the same diligence for thirty miles, and when we reached the village of Ewert, her father-in-law, who was her sole traveling companion, became very ill—in fact, I thought he would die ere we reached the inn."
"It was an awkward position for a lady," remarked Alice; "alone, and in a strange country, with a dying man."
"Yes, very awkward, and Miss Robsart realized this keenly," he replied. "But, then, Laura was not a weakish woman, nor

one easily frightened or nonplussed, so she at once asked my assistance to help the invalid from the creaking old vehicle to the inn, and when I had done so, she said: 'You being an American, as we are, I am emboldened to ask you if you would please secure us seats in the diligence that leaves tomorrow for Cologne. We intend to rest there until my father-in-law recovers sufficiently to travel further.'"
"Did you do so?" asked Mabel, interested in the story.

"Of course I did. Men are not apt to disoblige beautiful women, Miss Lynn, especially when they are not seriously inconvenienced by the performance of the gallantry, and Laura was beautiful—very, very beautiful, indeed."

Mabel blushed as he said this, remembering what he had said of a resemblance between her and Laura; and Alice, coloring slightly, asked:

"Was she a widow?"
"Yes. I afterward learned from her own lips that her husband died in California, in 1853."

"Did her father-in-law die abroad?" questioned Alice.

"No, I went with them to Cologne, and remained there for three months. On several occasions he was on the brink of the grave, but by tender nursing, on the part of Laura, he was brought through; and two years ago, when I parted with them at Antwerp, he was as sound physically as I am to-day."

When the trio returned to the house, the lamps were lit in the grand saloon.
"Play something for us, Alice, will you?" asked John Nevin; "and you, Miss Mabel, sing. I know you can sing."

Alice played, with dashing vivaciousness of manner, a sprightly air; then the accompaniment to a song of welcome, which Mabel sang with fervor and brilliancy, and when the music ceased, John Nevin thanked his entertainers, and by request sung an old, quaint, dreary German song himself.

The lamps were burning low and the moonlight was streaming in through the half-open windows, and falling in light, fantastic shapes on the velvet carpet, when the two girls bid John good-night, and tripped up-stairs to bed.

"Oh, Mabel, ain't he handsome?" exclaimed Alice, as soon as they had reached their chamber, clasping her hands together and drawing a long breath.

"Yes," answered Mabel, "but not very affectionate. Cold as an iceberg, and gloomy as one of those old cathedrals he seems so fond of."

"But he will not be so after he is better acquainted," said Alice. "Besides, he seemed warm enough at times."

"Yes—when he spoke of Laura."

Alice's eyes dropped, and her heart gave a great, apprehensive bound.
Nothing further was said until Alice had all her purple black hair floating around

her marble shoulders, and then she asked, with an earnestness in her voice altogether rare:

"Do you think, Mabel, John loves Mrs. Robsart?"

Mabel was surprised at the question, but she adroitly managed to conceal her surprise, and answered:

"How absurd! Has not John Nevin been engaged to you ever so many years, and is not this Laura—what did he call her?"

"Robsart."

"Yes; this Laura Robsart a widow, and twice as old as you?"

"But, then, he says she is beautiful, and men sometimes have such queer tastes."

Mabel looked at the speaker, as she sat on the bedside, combing her hair with her fingers in an abstract way, and thought to herself—"Laura Robsart must be very beautiful, indeed, if she wins John Nevin from you."

Meanwhile John Nevin was strolling up and down the path between the double row of red oaks in front of the house, thinking of the past, of the old world, and of the golden-haired vision that never left him for a moment.

CHAPTER VI.

LAURA, THE BEAUTIFUL.

THE Ocean House, Newport, was thronged with guests, and the brilliant ball-room was aglow with beauty. Bright eyes and diamonds sparkled in rivalry, and the giddy dancers floated around the glittering floor to the sweet, voluptuous strains of Offenbach, or sauntered out on the colonnades, or to the beach, under the star-lit sky.

Mabel and Alice were delighted. It was their first night at Newport, and they stood by one of the windows, and watched the dancers, while John Nevin pointed out the celebrities to them. Mabel could scarce restrain herself from giving expression to her wonderment and pleasure.

"Who is that lady there, Ansen?" asked a young man addressing another who stood close to John.

"Which one?"

"That one there, standing at the opposite window, in blue silk, with the yellowish hair in such abundance."

"Oh, that's a new arrival; just got here to-day—a widow. Stylish, ain't she?"

"Very. What's her name?"

"I heard it, but I can't remember now. Sounds something like Roberts, but it ain't that."

John Nevin glanced carelessly in the direction pointed out by the speaker; then an exclamation of delight escaped him. "That's she!" he said, turning to his companions—"that's Laura—Mrs. Robsart, I mean."

Alice's black eyes sought out the fair face, and devoured it for an instant; then her heart sunk, and she said:

"She is very lovely."

Yes; Mabel even acknowledged that she

was very pretty, although, for her part, being light herself, she preferred dark beauties—like Alice.

Just then, Captain Houston came up with the son of an old friend, an artist, George Dalby, and after the introductions had been got through with, John Nevin excused himself, and went off in quest of Laura Robsart.

Mr. Dalby was agreeable, full of compliments and pretty sayings, and he at once endeavored to interest Alice and Mabel, in the gossip of the place; but, although the former smiled often, her eyes were wandering everywhere in search of that cold, silent man—John Nevin—whom she was every day learning to love more passionately.

"Will the ladies take a stroll in the open air?" asked Mr. Dalby. "The moon is rising, now, and the beach will be thronged directly."

"Yes," said Mabel, noticing Alice's abstraction, "let us go."

Grandly the moon arose out of the Atlantic's vast wilderness of waters, lighting up the shore, and painting a sheeny path of silver on the waves.

"You should paint this picture, Mr. Dalby," said Mabel, filled with admiration.

"I have a half a dozen such views in my New York studio," he answered; "but they don't sell. Everybody who fancies he can paint, tries moonlit seas, and consequently they are a drug on the market."

"I think a good picture of this would sell, though."

"Would you buy one?"

"I? Oh, I can't afford it."

"What if I should paint one—just as a reminder of our first meeting—would you give the poor daub a place in your room?"

She looked into his eyes; they were frank and manly, and she said, in reply:

"That is too much work, Mr. Dalby. I can't accept."

He interrupted her.

"We will say nothing more about it, now, Miss Lynn." Then, turning to Alice, who had all this time been silent, "Miss Houston is under a cloud, like the bright moon, just now, and while we talk she thinks."

Alice started. "Pardon me, I was looking at the sea."

"The sea is not sensitive, Miss Houston; it don't mind being stared at, and in that respect it differs from most beauties—eh?"

The two girls laughed at the odd conceit. Mabel was beginning to admire this gay, handsome, chatty young man, and Alice thought him very nice for a new acquaintance.

Crowds of people, now, were strolling up and down the beach, or standing in knots upon the white sand.

Mr. Dalby knew a great many; he had been a regular visitor at Newport for five consecutive seasons, and, as he walked along, he entertained the girls with stories of gayety and love-making, some of which he had only heard, but a great many of

which he knew either one or both of the parties concerned.

"Do you see that tall gentleman, there, with the lightish suit, talking to the lady in mourning?" he asked.

"Yes, they saw him distinctly. But that man left his wife and two children in London, to follow a young widow, with whom he became infatuated while spending a season at Bath."

"Indeed!" said Mabel, shocked at the revelation. "But what brought him to America?"

"She, of course! She is an American, and he followed her."

"She must be a very wicked woman," said Alice.

"On the contrary, she has the reputation of being a very kind lady. It was her first fault, she did not ask his admiration in love. He simply fell; wasn't knocked down."

"What brought him to Newport?"

"It was Mabel who spoke, with her eyes riveted on the strange man."

"Why, she came here, and he must needs follow her, as if he were an *ignis fatuus*."

"Is that her in black, talking to him now?" asked Alice.

"Oh, no, bless your soul! She don't speak to him at all," answered the artist. "This said she begged of him to return to his family, when she first met him here, and on his refusal she bid him never recognize her again."

"And does he?" asked Mabel, her eyes still fixed on the man.

"No, he never does. Whenever she appears in the drive, however, he manages to get pretty close to her, and when she walks he follows her with his eyes. It's a clear case of lunacy, I think; mild, but dangerous."

A woman's laugh—rippling, silvery, joyous, sounded close behind our friends, and then George Dalby whispered:

"That's the lady, now—the beautiful widow."

The two girls glanced to the right, from whence the peal of laughter had come, and there, in the moonlight, they saw Laura Robarts leaning on the arm of John Nevin!

She was looking up into his face, and the moonbeams fell full upon hers, making it look white as marble, and marvellously beautiful indeed. Her golden hair fell in waves upon her shoulders, screened now from the falling dew by a heavy shawl of genuine thread lace, and at her white rounded throat a great diamond burned like a coal of fire.

John Nevin was talking to her in a low, subdued voice—so low that none heard him, save herself, and she answered with occasional merry bursts of laughter.

They pressed close to Dalby and his companions, but so rapt were they in each other, that, although Alice could have laid her hand on John Nevin's arm, he did not recognize her.

They walked on, and on, until the amber naist, which was beginning to curtain in the scene, hid them from view, and close behind them, like a gray shadow of despair, walked the man whose wife and children waited for him beyond the ocean.

When Mabel saw John Nevin with Laura Robarts, whom she now regarded as a dangerous woman, she felt her indignation rising against him.

Why should he have come back to awaken a love in Alice Houston's simple, girlish heart, when he was so completely in the meshes of this woman; and why had he not the courage to ask a release from an engagement made so many years ago, that it could not be considered binding on either?

"He must be either a weak or a wicked man," she muttered to herself.

These thoughts flashed through her brain in an instant, and then, noticing how very white and ghostly Alice was, she said: "Let's go back to the hotel. It's getting chilly."

"The dew is very heavy," remarked Dalby. "Are you cold, Miss Alice?"

She was all of a shiver now, and she shut her teeth firmly together to prevent them from chattering.

"Yes, very cold. Let's go back!"

She thanked George Dalby when he offered her wrap close about her, and then, casting a lingering, yearning look in the direction John Nevin had disappeared, she took the young artist's arm, and they began to retrace their steps.

CHAPTER VII.

ROCKLEDGE.

ELTON ROBARTS occupied the handsome cottage at Newport. It stood on a ledge of rocks about a mile from the Ocean House, and overlooked the sea. It was called Rockledge, and was splendidly furnished throughout; the floors covered with velvet and rich Brussels, and the windows draped in finest tapestry, even to the floors. There was a wide colonnade in front, up the snowy columns of which dark vines clambered, and hung in festoons from the eaves, dotted here and there with red berries, which looked very much, when ripe, like drops of blood.

In the large airy drawing-room sat Elton Robarts, reading Goldsmith's "Animated Nature." He was apparently sixty years old, although he might have been younger by half a decade. Starting out in life with a handsome face, form and fortune, he had led a wild, reckless, voluptuous life, until at forty he found himself a mere wreck, both morally and physically.

His wife, whom he married shortly after reaching his majority, bore him but one child, and then being a weak woman, folded her hands meekly over her breast, and drifted into eternity. Her memory, and his son Cleve, were all he had to live for, and these he either thought too insignificant to influence him, or else—and this is altogether the most likely—he never thought of them at all, until he returned from a ten years' jaunt through Europe, to find Cleve a young man of twenty, and himself a decrepit, worn-out *roue*, not far from forty.

This awakened thought to a sense of his situation, and he set about educating his boy after his own peculiar ideas, and to building up his shattered constitution by a free use of drugs and exercise. He took too much of both, and became an invalid, and Cleve, whose moral training amounted to nothing, grew tired of the old gentleman's exactions and ran off to the west, *advised* *advised*.

This affected old Elton seriously; he believed his son was ungrateful, and hard-hearted, and in his fury he burned the three letters Cleve sent him. He knew from the postmarks they were from the west, but that was all. A few years of silence between him and his wayward child caused him to relent, and when he was thinking about advertising for the absentee, in the western papers, a young woman wrote to

him from Baltimore, saying that she was the widow of Cleve Robarts, and that the latter had died in the mines of California.

He telegraphed for her to come to him at once, and the next day the steamer bound for Norfolk landed her within a hundred yards of Robarts Place.

The old man questioned her about his son closely, but she answered him frankly, and with a candor that disarmed suspicion. She described Cleve minutely, and bore on her index finger a large gold band which she said was her wedding ring.

"You shall have a home with me here as long as I live," he said, at length, "and when I die, Robarts Place shall be yours."

This was how it came about that Laura Robarts became mistress of vast wealth and greater expectations.

She did not let her good fortune turn her brain, though, and night and day she thought of nothing else but of devising means to add to the old man's comfort, and it was partly owing to her care, and partly to his own taste, that he always looked so neat and clean—just as if he lived in a satin-lined bandbox.

On the morning of this introduction to the reader, he was robed in glossiest cashmere, with white and gold slippers on his feet, and a pink silk smoking-cap upon his head.

The white neckcloth gave him a clerical look, which his sensuous face partially belied, and the hand that grasped the volume he read trembled nervously. He was becoming tired of Goldsmith, when Laura Robarts, all pink and white, stole into the room, and creeping up behind him, surprised him with a kiss.

"Ah! sunbeam," he said, with a smile, "you are late getting down this morning."

"Yes—a little late. Did you miss me?"

He did not notice that she was angling for a compliment, and said, at once:

"Yes, I missed you this morning, and I missed you last night. You were out late on the beach—weren't you?"

"I was home at ten."

"Who was with you?" He was patting her white arm—so much like ivory—that lay upon his knee.

"John Nevin."

"Indeed! I thought he was in Europe."

The old gentleman's brow was clouding. He was jealous of John Nevin, and he feared Laura would not always prove faithful to the memory of his son. But she saw through him at once; had he been made of glass he could not have been more transparent to that woman who knelt at his feet, and looked up, like an innocent child, into his face.

"He came back a month ago," she answered. "He is coming over this evening to see you."

"I don't want to see him," he exclaimed, pettishly. "He must not come here."

She opened her big, blue eyes, and buried her white teeth in her coral lip. "Why, papa?"

He was ashamed of himself now, and so he said: "I'm in no mood for company, Laura; and, indeed, I think we had better start for Maryland in a week at the furthest. This place is too busy and obtrusive for me."

"Yes, it was busy, and meddlesome," she said; and then, while in her secret heart she determined not to leave Newport, she said, "I prefer Robarts Place to this cottage anyway, and the Chesapeake to the sea, at all times."

He was pleased. "You are ever giving in to me," he said, "and some day you'll not regret it."

In the dusky twilight John Nevin came over to Rockledge. Laura met him on the colonnade, and gave him a cordial welcome. "You are looking lovely this evening," he said.

"And you," she answered, smiling, "are as sad-faced as ever. Do you know that you remind me of but one person in the world, and that an actor, whom I once saw play 'Hamlet' in Leeds."

"You, on the other hand, remind me of two other persons," he replied.

She laughed—that old, joyous, rippling laugh—and asked: "And who are those two?"

"A friend of my cousin Alice is one, and Goethe's 'Marguerite' the other."

She curled her lip in disbelief, and they walked down the path toward the sea.

When they tired of rambling about, John found a seat for her on a mossy stone. They could see the sea from where they sat, looking wan and gray in the gloaming, and hearing the cool wash of the waves, as they lapped the sandy shore, or thumped themselves white against the rocks.

To see her sitting there, with her elbow on her knee, and her chin in her hand, one would never suppose that she had studied that attitude as one of inimitable grace—the grace of abandon—and yet she had studied that, as she studied every thing else. She never made an awkward movement in John Nevin's presence. If she stood still, her attitude was classically statuesque; if she walked, it was with a bounding, springy gait; if she paused in the garden to pluck a rose, her supple form bent over the bush in an artistic pose that would have made her fortune on the stage.

And yet John Nevin thought of her only as a joyous, innocent, artless woman; and now, standing there by her side, and looking down on the coronet of gold which circled her shapely head, he wondered why other women were not capable of fascinating him, with all their wiles; as this woman did without the use of any. And still John Nevin was not a fool, nor a dolt; he was a keen-sighted, shrewd, traveled man, and he fancied he could read Laura Robarts's inmost thoughts, as readily as he could a page of "Pendennis."

Neither one of them was speaking, and yet the silence did not strike them as being stupid or dull. For his part he could have stood there in the darkening dusk with her, so silent and so close, for a century, without weariness, and she—well, she was pleased with the silence, or she would have broken it.

Women are very adroit in such matters, and Laura was in many respects a remarkable woman.

Presently a boat hove in sight, and, as it approached, they saw a man sitting in the stern. He was thrumming on a guitar, and singing, in a rich, clear voice, "HER BRIGHT SMILE HAUNTS ME STILL."

It was too dark to discern the features of the man, but both of them recognized the voice. Laura turned deathly pale, and trembled like an aspen.

"It's Gilbert Rook," she said.

"Yes, and the fellow's as crazy as ever," said John. "It was very unfortunate for you that you ever met him."

CHAPTER VIII.

ROCKLEDGE.

"I wish I never had," she said, rising. "I can not tell the reason why, but I have a gloomy, undefined dread of that man."

"His persistent attentions to you have caused this," said John, endeavoring to free her from apprehension, "and the knowledge that he has a wife and family in England doubtless gives a deeper tinge to this vague fear."

"No; it may be partly that, but it is not wholly so; from the first moment I set eyes upon him at Bath, I felt as if he was to be my evil genius, and, hard as I have tried to get rid of the notion, it clings to me yet."

She shrugged her pretty shoulders and shivered.

"I wouldn't mind," said John, after a moment of silence. "The fellow was, possibly, crazy before you met him, and, but for his admiration of you, his malady would doubtless have assumed a more violent form."

She sighed, and gave John Nevin her hand. He pressed it warmly, and they turned away from the sobbing sea, walking silently toward Rockledge, while the sad song of Gilbert Rook rung in their ears:

Many dangers I have known, and to be of that reckless life can fill, But her presence has not flown—Her bright smile haunts me still!"

He parted with her at the colonnade, and she watched him out of sight.

"When is all this misery to end?" she muttered, aloud.

"When women are not false as fair."

The answer came in a deep, solemn voice, and Laura only lifted her eyes, to let them fall on a weird, haggard woman, who stood like a picture of despair almost within arm's length of her.

Laura Robarts was chilled through and through with a nameless dread.

"Who are you?" she managed to say.

"Don't you know me?"

The strange woman's voice was hard and cold.

"You are devoid of memory, I see, as well as conscience."

There was something familiar, even in that chilling tone, and Laura now, determined to solve the mystery at once, said:

"Why have you come here—what do you want of me?"

"I am playing the role of Nemesis," was the answer. "I want vengeance, or my own."

"What have I of yours. Are you crazy, woman?"

"No, only desperate."

"What do you mean by asking me for your own, then, in this threatening way. I have nothing belonging to you, or yours."

"Yes, you have! The woman's breath was coming quick and hard now.

"What is it?" and as Laura put the question, she shrunk away in terror.

"My husband's heart."

"His name?" gasped Laura.

"Gilbert Rook!"

Laura shrieked as if a knife had penetrated her heart, and fell in a heap at the woman's feet.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 95.)

The Dark Secret: The Mystery of Fontelle Hall.

BY COUSIN MAY CARLETON.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE STORY IN THE LONE INN.

"How now, you secret, black and midnight hag, what's your do?"

That same night, three hours earlier, there might have been seen, if there had been anybody out to see, which there wasn't, an ancient mariner plodding his way along the longsome road between the Mermaid Tavern and the lone inn. The night was dark, and the road was bad, but Captain Nick Tempest had a supreme contempt for muddy roads, and the clerk of the weather; so, with his hands in his pockets, and a plug of tobacco in his mouth, his tar-paulin cocked on one side of his head, he plunged manfully along, whistling "Barbara Allen" as he went, by jerks, with long pauses between the bars.

Captain Tempest was thinking—which was something he was not in the habit of doing as a general thing, being more given to acting. Old Grizzle's manner the night before had implied something serious; and he felt intensely curious to know what revelations she had to make to-night. That it was something important, he felt convinced.

For Grizzle was not a lady to make a mystery of trifles; and, moreover, she had contrived to have her two hopeful sons, Kit and Blaise, and her equally hopeful brother, old Till, sent out of the way, that she and the commander of the "Fly-by-Night" might hold their nocturnal *re-a-tote* undisturbed.

Not being blessed with a very vivid imagination, however, old Nick found the nut too hard to crack; and, so wisely resolved not to strain his teeth trying it, but to wait until time and his fair friend should see fit to extract the kernel.

Having, with much pain and labor, come to this philosophical conclusion at last, Captain Nick steered contentedly along, with that rolling motion peculiar to marine gentlemen, like a ship on an uneasy swell. Plunging resolutely through the wet level where the old house stood, he reached it at last; and, giving a tremendous knock, began yelping like a whipped cur. Evidently this was a sort of signal, for the sound of bolts withdrawing, followed instantly. The door swung open, and the pleasant face of old Grizzle Howlett beamed on him by the light of the lantern.

"Good-night, my chick-a-leary! Punctuality is the soul of time," said the punctual, in a hazy recollection of some proverb. "How do you find yourself this morning, my sweet pet? Blooming and beautiful as the Goddess of Morning, as usual, I see."

There was a time when you thought me blooming enough," said the woman, in a harsh voice, as she secured the door; "when you would have shot any other man for even looking at me!"

"Ah! every one is a fool some time in their life," said the captain, flinging himself into a chair before the kitchen fire, and stretching out his legs to the genial heat. "Not that I would insinuate I made a fool of myself in that blessed and verdant time of youth: for you are a second Helen, for whom mother Troy might be lost." "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" but greater still is Grizzle of New Jersey! Got any beer?"

"Yes, take it," said the woman, ungraciously, pointing to a jug and a pewter pint

on the table. "There's a pipe, too, if you want it."

"It's just exactly what I do want. Ah! that's prime stuff!" said the captain, smacking his lips. "It reminds me of the bottles of 'Old and Aft' we used to drink in the green-room of Old Drury, between the scenes. Do you remember those blissful times, my beauty?"

"Yes, better than I want to," said Grizzle, almost savagely, as she sat on a low stool, and with her elbow on her knees, and her chin between her hands, looked gloomily in the fire. "I'm not likely to look at you and forget them."

"And here's a ha'n' my trusty friend," and Grizzle's hand o' thine, we'll take a glass guide willowacht for the days o' auld lang syne."

For the days o' auld lang syne," sung the captain, jocosely, as he resumed his seat, and leisurely proceeded to fill his pipe.

"That's so, old friend. Ah! those were the days!"

"I am glad you think so well of them. You gave me cause to remember them after another fashion."

A grim smile broke over the face of the captain, as he pushed up his hat, which he considered it a superfluous piece of ceremony to take off; and, having unbuttoned his coarse pea-jacket and thrown it open, he blew a few whiffs of smoke to get his pipe in good going order, and leisurely replied:

"I believe I did act kind of ugly about that business; but you see, my love, man is naturally tickle, and Captain Nick Tempest particularly so. What does our old acquaintance, Shakespeare—glorious Will—say?"

"Just not to man—we are by nature false, Dissembling, cruel, subtle, and inconstant. When a man talks of love, with caution trust him; But if he swears, he'll certainly deceive thee."

And I was ready to swear, you know, that fair was foul and foul was fair, for your sake, at one time. It is wonderful how soon I got over that short brain-fever."

"Yes, when a prettier face came between," said the woman, bitterly. "Don't scowl, Nick Tempest! The day has gone by when I feared your frown!"

"Did you ever fear it?"

"No need to ask that question; you know too well I didn't dare to call my soul my own. Thank Heaven I am not the only woman in the world who has been deceived by a charitable thanksgiving!" said the captain, with a sneer.

"You didn't bring me here, I hope, to talk mandarin sentiment of by-gone days. Let the dead bury their dead." It's devilish hard to rekindle black ashes."

"Don't fear. I have no more wish to recall the past than you have. Yet it may be necessary to allude to it more than once to-night."

A dark, sinister smile was on her face, and her evil eyes gleamed red and hot in the light of the fire.

"Well, fire away, my duck! My feelings are none of the tenderest, or most sensitive," said the captain, smoking severely.

"Then you have changed since a certain day, some years ago, if you remember. There was a name then you did not exactly covet hearing."

"You mean Lelia. I've got nicely over that."

"I am glad to hear it. Then you will not object to my alluding to her a little?"

"What do you want to allude to her for? What's the use of raking up plague-pits?"

"I never do anything without an object, as you will discover before I have done. I have sent for you to tell you a short, and, I flatter myself, not uninteresting story, to-night."

"The captain stared."

"A story—what the dickens? You have not taken leave of your senses, have you?"

"Not exactly! Are you ready to listen?"

"All right—leave ahead."

The woman glanced askance at him, as he sat smoking, the very picture of composure—an evil, mocking glance; and then, dropping her voice into the monotonous monotone of a true story-teller, she began:

"Once upon a time, in a certain theatrical corps, of a certain theatre in Old England, there was a leading actress, a young girl, who did a heavy-tragedy business, and was one of the bright particular stars of the day—she was not very handsome, this girl; but when she trod the boards, and her voice rung through the house, people forgot her looks, and thunders of applause shook the building from pit to ceiling. Night after night, when she appeared as Lady Macbeth, Jeanne d'Arc, Catherine De Medici, and a score of other dark, fierce characters, into which she could throw all the fire and passion of her nature, has her name been shouted amid the dense public were hoarse; and flowers and bouquets, and tapers sometimes, have rained down on the stage, until you could not step for trampling on them; and this tragic muse, this new Melpomene, became the toast of the day."

"Self-praise is no recommendation," muttered the captain.

"Peers of the land knelt at her feet with offers, which she spurned, as she did those who made them—spurned them with fierce, indomitable pride, until all London had to respect, as well as praise her. Offers of marriage were made her, too, from men over whose eyes, and brains, and hearts, her acting cast a glamor, like the fatal song of the fabled siren—offers she once never dreamed of receiving; and yet she spurned them, too. And why did she do so?—tell me why?"

And the woman turned fiercely round on the stoical captain.

"Ah! just so! Why, the deuce only knows," said that worthy mariner, with an expressive shrug.

"You know, which amounts to the same thing! There was a young actor attached to the same company—not much noted for his beauty, nor his dramatic talent; a wild, reckless, devil-may-care sort of a desperado—fierce as a Bedouin of the desert—feared by all, and loved by none."

"My dear, you flatter," said Captain Nick, with a look of mock humility.

"Loved by none, did I say?" Ah, yes! there was one—more fool she—who loved him with all her heart, with all her soul—would have sold herself to Satan to win one smile from him. A woman's heart is a strange riddle, since even she herself can not read it."

"That's so!" said the captain, emphatically.

"This actress, who had refused so many better, richer, handsomer men, stooped to love him—how well, there is no need to tell now. And he—he discovered it. She was not one to keep such a secret, she had hot blood in her veins—hot blood that had descended to her through fiery channels."

"So had he," said the captain, with a

laugh; "and there is an old-country saying, that 'butter to butter is no kitchen.'"

"He was proud of it—he might well be; for it elevated him from the nobody he was before, into an object almost of equal interest with herself. She was rich, and she shared her wealth with him; and he took her money and led a life of riot and wildest debauchery, spending it like water from the clouds."

Captain Nick perceptibly winced.

"He said he loved her, and she believed him—poor fool! Perhaps he thought he did; but at all events, he loved her money and the reputation he had gained by having his name linked with hers. And it was all arranged that they were to be married as soon as her engagement was ended, and travel in the Continent. She did not entirely disapprove of his wild courses; women rather like men who have the reputation of being *harm-scarum* dare-devils; but she thought he carried things to excess—more especially as he sometimes stooped to robbery—even to robbing the dead. One's husband, she thought she could have reformed him a little; and that, having sown his wild oats, he would settle down and leave the crop to the birds of the air."

"Humph!" said the captain.

"It is doubtful whether she would have succeeded—the demon had too strong a hold of him for that. But, at all events, she was spared the trouble of the young ballet-girl of surpassing beauty appeared—a young French girl, only known as Lelia—poor as a church-mouse, and, rumor said, no better than she ought to be."

"Rumor lied there! She was the peer of the actress, in these days, on that point!" said Captain Tempest, calmly.

"Perhaps so; her after-actions showed it! Well, this young actor saw her, and a powder-magazine, when a lighted torch is thrown in it, could not quicker or more fiercely go off, than did he after Mademoiselle Lelia."

"Just like him? He always had a nasty habit of going up like a rocket and coming down like a stick," said the captain, with a half chuckle.

"I do not suppose she loved him—I am pretty sure she did not; but she wanted to get married, and she thought by his way of living he had plenty of money. And so he had; but the generous, noble-hearted youth it was her money

"Well, one day he went to sea, and was wrecked somewhere on the coast of Cuba, and all hands were lost but himself. You know the adage: 'Born to be hanged will never be drowned.' So you will not wonder at that. He was picked up by a private vessel, and would you believe it?—eleven years passed before he came back."

Something like a groan came from the lips of the captain.

"But come he did at last—a weather-beaten, scarred, prematurely-old man. And where do you think he found his wife and child?"

"You hag of Hades! I may thank you perhaps, for it all."

"You may. But for me she would never have run away."

"You she and I! Are you not afraid I will brain you?"

"No!"

"By the heavens above us! if you had made that confession six years ago, you would not have lived an instant after!"

"But I did not make it. I was not quite a fool! Be calm, and let me go on with my story. One year after her husband went away—when her daughter was six years old (and she was still a pretty, dark-eyed, bright-haired, merry French girl)—a young foreigner—a wild, rich, young Scotchman, stopped at my house. He was a handsome fellow, dark-eyed, merry, bold and gallant—just the one to take a lady's eye—more especially such a lady as our pretty, young, grass-widow."

Captain Nick Tempest ground his teeth with impotent rage.

"His name was Randall Macdonald—how do you like it?—and he came from the old Macdonald who lived and fought in the days of Robert the Bruce. I introduced him to the handsome French girl, and what—"

Captain Tempest, my good friend—my dear friend—what was the result?"

"You cursed hag!" he groaned, through his clenched teeth.

Such a bitter sneer as was on her dark face—such a bitter, mocking, deriding sneer! Yet she looked up, and smiled in his face.

"Voyages across the ocean were slower even in those days than they are now; and our handsome Scotchman was lonesome, and wanted a companion. A pretty French woman, gay and piquant, was just the thing; and the young gentleman was not one to be backward in offering her an invitation. I urged her to accept it. I promised to be a mother to little Lelia, and the result of our combined entreaties was, that Captain Tempest came from sea one morning, and found himself minus a wife."

She broke into a laugh—a low, sneering laugh, unspeakably tinged.

"I changed little Lelia's name, and gave her my second one; and, under my motherly care, she reached the age of thirteen. Then—but never mind that Lelia; we must follow the fortunes of the other. Randall Macdonald was fond of a roving life, and he and madame had rather a pleasant time of it, cruising round the world. Six years after his American escapade, his eldest brother died, and the family estate fell to him. The day that brought him the news saw Lelia cold and dead—of disease of the heart. She had died caressing her little daughter—his child—without a moment's warning. No wonder you never could find her when you went to search for her. You would have to dive a long way down under the waves of the lonesome sea to find the pretty form of Lelia Tempest."

He made a fierce gesture, as if casting something from him, and drew a long, hard breath.

"Let her go! That is the last of her! But my child, woman—my daughter—my little Lelia! what of her?"

The woman laughed scornfully, and stirred the fire.

"Speak! I tell you! Speak! I command you!" he cried, fiercely. "You have not dared to kill her?"

"Kill her? Oh, no. That would be poor revenge!"

"You Satan! where is my child?"

"Don't fear, she is alive, and well. He got up, white with eagerness.

"Woman, tell me where she is!"

"It is easy told—if I choose!"

"Grizzle, for the sake of old times—for the sake of all that is past and gone, let me see her—my little Lelia!"

She looked at him in scornful surprise, and broke into a deriding laugh.

"You to speak of what is past and gone!—you to exhort me by that! The man has gone mad!"

"You she-devil! speak! or I will tear it out of your foul throat!"

"Try it!"

"Can nothing move you? My little Lelia! Oh, Grizzle! can nothing move you?"

"Nothing you can say! Sit down; calm yourself, and you will hear all in due time. Perhaps you will not think 'my little Lelia' such a priceless jewel when you do find her?"

"What do you mean? Grizzle, Howlet, what have you done with that child?"

There was something so terrific in his look and tone, at that moment, that she almost shrunk before it.

"Nothing very dreadful," she said, angrily. "Sit down, I tell you, or I won't speak another word to-night. What if you were to hate your daughter when I name her?"

"There is some dark meaning hid under this. Grizzle, Howlet, has her mother's fate been?"

She laughed.

"Oh, no! Can you conceive nothing worse than that? Her mother loved and was beloved—in a sort of a way, I dare say she was happy."

His face worked, and his hands clenched. One fair spot remained still in that black heart—love for his child. But for how long?

"Will you tell me?" he said, in a strained voice.

"To be sure. That is what I have been coming to all along. She is a fine lady."

"Well?"

"You have seen her—spoken with her?"

"Did she know me?"

"No."

"Where does she live?"

"Here—in New Jersey."

"Well, go on. I can not bear this; you are torturing me."

"I will be merciful then. You were to me, you know! Do you remember a scene that occurred some thirty miles from here, one evening, among the mountains, when you tried to send a certain handsome young Englishman to his long account?"

"Yes."

"A young girl—a bold, pretty little thing—red-haired and gray-eyed, like somebody else we know of—interposed—saved him, disarmed you, and sent you off, with a lecture?"

"Yes, curse her! I will be avenged for that!"

"Softly—softly, captain," said Grizzle, with her dark smile. "Wait until you hear who she is, first."

"Who is she?"

"Do you know that my name is Grizzle, Jacquetta?"

"Well, I changed Lelia into Jacquetta, one day. It was easily done, and without troubling the Legislature."

He leaped to his feet with a cry. She arose, too, and confronted him.

"Grizzle, Howlet, is she—"

"She was Lelia Tempest once; she is Jacquetta De Vere, now, and your daughter!"

CHAPTER XVII.

THE END OF THE STORY.

"Such a mad marriage never was before."

—TAMING OF THE SHREW.

THERE is but one step—a very short one—between love and hatred. In all these years of crime, and daring, and darkest guilt, the memory of his lost child—his little bright-eyed, sunny-faced Lelia—had ever lain warm and fair near his heart; the only fair spot, perhaps, in all that dark nature. He had thought, all along, that her mother had taken her with her in her guilty flight; but he knew little of the revenge Grizzle Howlet was capable of. He never dreamed of doubting her story for a moment—he felt it to be true, every word; and in that instant all his love for the little bright-faced child was swept away, like a whiff of down in the blast; and hatred of the daring, imperious young girl, who had conquered him, took its place. He felt that she despised and looked down upon him, her father, although she knew it not; and a savage, demoniac longing to drag her down to his own level, filled all his thoughts. She was his daughter; no one had such a right to her as he had. He hated the De Veres, and this dashing adopted daughter of theirs. What a glorious thing it would be now to tear her from them—to pull her from her pedestal—to show her to the world as Captain Nick Tempest's daughter! He felt a little proud of her, too; he exulted in the thought that she had her father's heart, and all his dauntless courage; and he felt he could freely forgive Grizzle Howlet all she had done for the revenge she had placed within his grasp now.

A fierce, grim smile—the smile of a demon bearing away a lost soul—broke over his dark face. He looked up, and met Grizzle Howlet's piercing eyes fixed full upon him.

"Well?" she said, curiously.

He stretched out his hand, still smiling: "I forgive you, Grizzle! There is my hand on it! This repays me for all."

"You believe me?" she said.

"Yes; I think you are telling me the truth. I feel that that girl is my daughter!"

"She is. Word for word what I have said is true—true as Gospel. Jacquetta De Vere is your child!"

The gods be praised for that! The day of retribution is at hand!"

"What are you going to do?" said Grizzle, half-anxiously.

He sat down, resumed his former attitude before the fire, with that evil smile still on his face.

"You will see! But, first, have you accomplished your revenge?"

"No!" cried Grizzle, fiercely, dashing her hand on the mantel—no; that I have not! Until Jack De Vere lies despoised and trodden on in the dust under my feet, my revenge will never be satisfied!"

"What has she done to you, to make you hate her so?" said the captain, serenely.

"Done what I will never forgive, if I were dying! I almost screamed the woman, her lion-passions slipping their leashes for a moment. I hated her, first, for her mother's sake—for her father's sake. I hated her as a child; for she never could endure me."

"I hate the De Veres, one and all, with their arrogant pride and supercilious contempt for all of inferior birth, and I swear to make them feel it. I have done so. The proudest of them all—the flower of the flock—lies crushed and bleeding under my feet! And there let her lie till the grave claims her!"

"Do you mean that haughty young empress, Lady Augusta?"

"Yes. I fancy I have settled her haughtiness for her!" said the woman, with a short, unpleasant laugh.

The captain looked curious.

"What has she done, and how did you get her in your power? Is she an adopted daughter, too?"

"No; she is a true De Vere, body and soul!"

"Then what power can you have over her? There is a long step between a De Vere and Grizzle Howlet."

"I have seven-league boots, and can take it. Never you mind, Captain Tempest. Your business is with Miss Jack, if you remember. What are you going to do, now that you have found out she is your daughter?"

"Claim her, to be sure! Think of a father's love, and all the rest of it, and you will perceive it is the only course," said the captain, with a laugh.

"Exactly. But how will you prove your claim?"

"You will come with me, my dear. When you and I lay our heads together, we can work wonders."

"We will, in this case. But have you no curiosity to hear how she ever came to live in Fontelle at all, or to assume her name?"

"A great deal. But you have a disagreeable way of only answering questions when you like; so I did not care for getting a rebuff."

"Then listen to the sequel. I hope you will find it quite as interesting as the first volume, and it will show you what a woman can do when she seeks revenge; and it will clear up a certain little mystery that has puzzled more than one resident in Fontelle Hall. Have you ever been told that strange sounds were sometimes heard in the old north wing of that building?"

"Of course. Push ahead."

"I rather fancy they have started a certain young gentleman resident there at pre-

sent. And that reminds me, you have no particular love for him either. Have you?"

"No, by Heaven!" said the captain, with an oath. "He struck me once; and that is an insult that only his heart's blood can wipe out!"

"I think you can pierce his heart in an easier and safer way, and, in fact, kill half a dozen birds with one stone. If he is not in love with Miss Jacquetta De Vere, then I know nothing of the tender passion; and, being as proud as Lucifer, he will be in a sweet frame of mind when he finds out who she is. Besides, he is engaged to another young lady. Guess who?"

"How the foul fiend can I guess? or what do I care?"

"A great deal, if you knew but all. The lady's name is Miss Norma Macdonald."

"Macdonald!"

"Yes," said Grizzle, with a smile; "her mother's name, I believe, was Mrs. Lelia Tempest, if you feel any interest in knowing it."

The captain gave a long, wailing whistle, and fell back in his seat.

"He is engaged to marry her, and is in love with your daughter; and our pretty Jacquetta is in love with him. Oh! it is the sweetest kettle of fish, all through, that ever you heard of."

"And it will be a death-blow to Don Monsieur Signor Moustache Whiskerando to find out he is in love with old Nick Tempest's daughter. 'I see!' said the blind man. 'Toi de roi, de roi, de roi!' sung the captain, delighted."

"Preserve your transports, my dear friend," said Grizzle, dryly. "Time enough for them when you stand face to face with the future lord of Guilford and Earncliffe. Remember, too, that though the old spouse-wife of Worcestershire prophesied that a life would be lost betwixt ye, she did not say which was to lose it. So Captain Nick Tempest had better take a fool's advice, and not halloo before he is out of the woods!"

"I don't fear him. Let him do his worst. Oh, this is revenge indeed! The bullet will hit them all to death—this come-by-chance of Lilia's as well as the rest."

"Don't be too sure—he will marry her."

"But, you say, he loves Jacquetta."

"So he does; but loving does not always imply marriage. I had hoped for a different end to the story, but this daughter of yours is made of more sterling stuff than her, and is not to be had for the asking. No; the Honorable Alfred De Vere Disbrow will never marry her! He wouldn't if he could, and couldn't if he would."

"Two very good reasons. I should like to see this daughter of Lilia's."

"And so they took him to Fontelle—Captain Tempest looked at her in surprise."

"Are you sure you never have?"

"Do you really think you have never seen Miss Norma Macdonald?"

"Well, I can't say. I may have done so without knowing it, while knocking about this jolly old world."

"Ah, just so!" said Grizzle, carelessly, peering the fire. "By the way, Captain Tempest, where is that little Spaniard you brought over with you the other day?"

"Now you are off on another track. What the demon makes you ask after him?"

"Oh, nothing! I felt curious to know—that's all."

"Well, he's at Fontelle, if I don't mistake. I winged him that evening I met my dutiful daughter, in mistake for our young English friend—poor little devil! I felt sorry for it, too, for I really liked the little lodger."

"And so they took him to Fontelle—hem!" said Grizzle, with a musing smile.

"There!—never mind him!—push along! I want to hear about Jacquetta!" said Captain Nick, impatiently.

"Well, all these things are so merged into one another, that it is difficult to separate them. I will try, however. I need not remind you that Jacquetta was six years old when her mother made her moonlight flitting."

"I am not likely to forget it. Go on."

"Well, she lived with me until she was thirteen years of age; and I took good care to impress on her memory the fact of her mother's disgrace, and—if you will believe it—child as she was, she felt it keenly. Of her father, I never told her anything. I left that for the gentleman himself."

"And quite equal he is to the task. Well?"

"She was pretty little thing—small and light, like a fairy, with a laugh like a bird's song, sweet and clear; short, flashing, dancing curls—red, like her father's, but very nice indeed; bright, sparkling, dark-gray eyes, and a dainty, delicate, pink-and-white complexion. I took care of her beauty, for a reason I had of my own, and cared for it every day, as a miser might for his money."

"You old wretch!" said the captain, with a look of disgust.

"She was a willful, fearless, bold, and stubborn after her own way—her father's child in every sense of the word. Once she put her foot down to do a thing, you might as well try to move the Highlands over there, as that small girl. She was cute, too, and wonderfully wide-awake for her years—keen as a Venetian silletto, and surprisingly smart at learning; so I have my doubts whether or not I would have succeeded—though, thanks to my training, she had refreshingly vague ideas of right and wrong."

"In some ways, she was like a woman, with all a woman's sense, even at that early age; and in others she was as simple as a child of three years. Howlet was dead, and my boys were away with Till; and I carefully kept Miss Jacquetta from all masculine eyes till the proper time came. Kit loved her; for she had the wildest and most winning ways, when in good humor, that ever a fairy had; but she only laughed at him, and nicknamed him and herself Beauty and the Beast, and Bluebeard and Fatima, Red Riding Hood and the Wolf, Vulcan and Venus, and other flattering and complimentary titles."

"Good girl, Jack!" laughed Captain Nick. "Her father's daughter, indeed! She knew what was what!"

"Kit's love soon turned to hate—as yours did, also, a little while ago; and I believe he would have throttled her, at times, if I would have let him. But I had better designs on the young lady than killing her, and an opportunity soon came for putting them into execution."

"Well?"

"Have you ever heard the name of Aubrey De Vere?"

"Not as I know of. Who was he?"

"A son of Mr. Robert De Vere, of Fontelle."

"What! I thought he had no sons!"

"Ah, he had, though—two."

"Well?"

"Aubrey was the eldest—tall and hand-

some, as all of his race are—but Nature, though she gifted him with wealth and beauty, gave him, also, a slight drawback, in the shape of madness; for there were times when the young man was a raving, furious maniac."

"Phew! That was a drawback, upon my word!"

"Some fright or shock he had received in his boyhood was the cause; and there were intervals still when he was perfectly sane. The family could always tell when one of his violent paroxysms were coming on, in rather a peculiar way. From childhood he had ever been passionately fond of music, but ever since the loss of his reason he never touched a musical instrument except when the furious outbreaks were approaching. Then he would sit down at the organ—his favorite instrument—and play as no man in his sober senses ever played before. His friends kept him confined, generally; but there were times when, with the cunning of madness, he would escape; and so sanely could he talk and act, that no one, except those who knew, would ever suspect him of not being sane."

"Not an uncommon case," said the captain. "I have often heard of similar ones before."

"I knew all the particulars. I heard it from an old servant in the house; so that, when, one stormy night, he came to my house (we lived on the other side of the Hudson then), I knew him at once, and made him welcome to stay as long as he liked; for he had plenty of money and knew how to spend it. Here he saw Jacquetta, and fell in love with her, as only a madman can love."

"The result was a marriage. She liked him well enough, and had a mighty vague idea of what marriage was; and he was crazy after her. Oh, it was capital revenge! marrying her to a madman, whose family would cast her off with scorn, as if she were the dirt under their feet."

"You were a little out of your reckoning there, though," said the captain, with a sneer.

"Yes. I am glad of it now, though, since a prospect of more exquisite revenge has opened itself. Jacquetta was a child, then, and had no idea of what she was doing; but I knew she would wake one day, and then there would be a scene! How I gloated in the prospect! How I exulted when it came!"

"It did come, then?"

"To be sure—but a long while after. I don't know whether it was his new-found happiness, or what, but Aubrey De Vere was a long time after that, and remained enchanted with his new toy—though his willful baby-wife got dreadfully tired of him sometimes. I could always tell when his insane fits were coming on, and smuggled him off to an upper room, and left him bolted and barred in till they passed away; and she knew nothing of them. It was not the time to tell her yet, though it was daily coming; for the woman's heart within her like plants in a hot-house, prematurely forced—was rapidly maturing, even though the breast that bore it barely numbered fourteen summers."

"But, one unlucky day, during a brief absence of mine to the city, he broke out with one of his furious outbursts of temporary madness, and raved, and foamed, and fled, like one possessed by a thousand devils, from the house. She shook—the amazement, the horror was too much for her, and she was gone. When I came back, I found her lying senseless on the floor, and hours passed before she awoke from that death-like swoon."

"Well?" said the captain, as Grizzle paused.

"There was a child born that night, and the baby-wife was a mother. The demon only knows what feeling prompted me to conceal the infant, but I did; a poor, miserable, puny thing it was; and, as for me, I covered, she believed what I told her of his sudden death. Blaise and Kit had lately purchased this very house; and I had it conveyed here, and paid a woman for taking care of it. That woman was Tribulation Rawbones, now a servant in Fontelle."

"Well, Jacquetta recovered, and so did her husband. Strangely enough, he had gone to Fontelle in his first outbreak; and from his ravings, they guessed what had happened. When he became sane again, he would have denied it, but his father followed him to my house, and learned all the particulars. Of course there was a pretty to-do, then; and the old gentleman was like one beside himself with grief and rage. Jacquetta was a perfect little fury, and would have sprung on me and clawed like a wild-cat, only I fled from the room. How I laughed! how I enjoyed it! how delicious it was!"

She laughed again at the recollection.

"You second Jezebel!" said the captain.

"They all calmed down again after a while, and began to reflect it was no use crying for spilled milk. Of course, Mr. De Vere would have nothing to do with Jacquetta. Oh, no! not at all! He pooh-poohed the notion; said the marriage was null and illegal, and carried off his son by force. The girl of fifteen was as proud in her way as the stately old Englishman was in his. She left him go without a word, and never again breathed the subject to me; but, oh! the delightful looks she used to favor me with—the little kite-heart!"

"Well?"

"Mr. Robert De Vere soon found he had reckoned without his host, when he thought he could get his son to give up his little bride. He became perfectly ungovernable, raved, foamed, shrieked like a wild beast, and called on Jacquetta night and day. In fact, there was no standing him at all, and nothing remained but to send for Jacquetta."

"And you let her go?"

"Of course. I knew my own interests. So proud was she, that she would not have went a step with him, only out of pity for Aubrey. But go she did at last."

"And that is how she came to live at Fontelle?"

"That is how. Her presence soothed him at once, and, strange to say, she and Miss Augusta, then a naughty little lady of ten years, became fast friends. She had, as I told you, winning ways, and cast a spell over every one she met by a sort of wild fascination about her, and very soon she became the idol of the household, and almost as dear to the master of Fontelle as his own daughter."

"So much the better! They will feel the parting with her the more."

"Right! So they will. Mr. De Vere did not care to publish on the house-tops that he had a son a madman; and as his paroxysms of madness were becoming daily more fre-

quent and violent, one of the rooms in the old deserted north wing was fitted up with barred windows and bolted doors, and he was confined there. Old Tribulation, a woman of iron nerves, and nerves, became his nurse, and every thing that could make him comfortable was given him. Even his fondness for music was thought of, and his organ was placed in his room, and remains there to this day; and before his fiercest attacks, he still favors them with a little unearthly music—most frequently at the dead of night."

"And that accounts for the strange noises," said the captain, musingly.

"Yes. As it would have excited curiosity and inquiry to call Jacquetta Mrs. De Vere, the change to Miss was very easy and convenient; and, as few visitors called at Fontelle, repelled by the pride of the aristocratic De Veres, people believed readily enough she was his younger daughter, for she looks several years younger than Augusta—small, fair people always do look younger than they are. And so—and so—she has lived there ever since; and that's all."

"And enough, by Jupiter! And so I'm a grandpapa—am I? Good gracious! I say, Grizzle, where's the child?"

She laughed, and continued stirring the fire.

"How dumb you are! Think a moment."

"Eh? Why—what? It's not little Orrie—is it?"

She nodded.

"Oh, Jehosophat! here's a mare's nest! And little black-eyes is a grand-daughter of mine!"

"She has that honor."

"Well, what will we hear next? And Jacquetta does not suspect?"

"I don't know. I

THE COTTAGE ON THE HILL.

BY MATTIE DYER BRITS.

There's a cosy little cottage on the hillside
With green trees growing all around,
And a sunny little stream in the meadow,
Where the clover-blossoms brighten all the ground.
There I turn my willing footsteps in the twilight,
When the night draws her curtains calm and still,
For I know a little girl who loves me dearly,
And her home is the cottage on the hill;
She's a sweet little girl and loves me dearly,
And she lives in the cottage on the hill.
I have looked into many lovely faces,
I have heard soft voices breathe my name,
I have seen rosy lips smile with pleasure,
And bright eyes grow brighter when I came.
But my heart would not waken to their wooing,
For its deepest chords will only thrill
With the fingers of the little girl who loves me,
Whose home is the cottage on the hill;
She's a sweet little girl and loves me dearly,
And she lives in the cottage on the hill.

The Red Rajah:

THE SCOURGE OF THE INDIES.
A TALE OF THE MALAYAN ISLES.

BY FREDERICK WHITTAKER.

(LONDON: FORTNYS.)

AUTHOR OF "MUSTANG JEWELLERS," "KNIGHT OF THE RUBIES," "THE GRIZZLY HUNTERS," "THE BLACK WIZARD," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER X.

THE HAPPY ISLAND.

A young girl of extraordinary beauty was reclined upon a gorgeous couch made of ebony and mother-of-pearl, and covered with China brocade. The couch was set in the midst of a large Persian carpet, as soft as velvet, and three inches thick. It lay in the center of a sort of pavilion or summer-house, framed of bamboo, covered with gilding, and hung with silk curtains.

Outside the pavilion, nature and art had vied to make the surroundings beautiful. Such luxuriance of trees, fruit, flowers, and brightly-feathered birds, was never seen outside of the tropics. We are in an island where winter comes not; where the sun of the equator makes summer all the year round. The cocoa blooms perpetually there, and the king-paradise-bird flits among the branches of the spice-trees.

But the eye of the observer would soon leave the surroundings, beautiful as they were, to rest upon the perfect beauty of the girl in the pavilion.

Slight in figure was the girl, and graceful as an antelope. The great dark eyes, that looked at you so innocently, were as beautiful as any eyes. Her hair, which was plaited in two long braids, was of such extraordinary length as to touch the ground when she walked. Her face was pale, but perfect in every feature as that of the Venus of Canova, with a heavenly purity of expression such as statue never knew.

Such a girl might have been suddenly dropped by the fairies to gladden the earth. She seemed too beautiful and innocent for the world.

She was magnificently dressed, in a gorgeous Oriental fashion; in cloth of gold sown with seed pearls; and the marvellous cambric of India, which the natives style "woven air," from its transparency and fineness, half-veiled the snowy bosom.

A dark slave girl, richly dressed, was fanning her with a large screen of paradise-bird's feathers, and her mistress was gazing through the parted curtains of the pavilion upon the moonlit sea, lost in reverie.

Her eyes were fixed upon the long, tapering yards, and low dark hulls of a little fleet of prahu, that lay at anchor in a small bay surrounded by white beach.

Several islands, their shores clothed with palm and banana, down to the water's edge, were to be seen, dotting the sea outside. The island appeared to be in the center of a tropical archipelago.

Presently the lovely girl spoke. Her voice was very low and soft, like the cooing of a ring-dove. She spoke in the Malay tongue, a marvellously melodious language from her rosy lips.

"Tell me, Sandala, what are they doing in the fleet? Does the Rajah put forth today?"

"The Rajah had some news this morning, lady. Kakoo came in under all sail; and ever since there has been a bustle of getting ready. May it please your resplendency, I see the great Rajah himself coming toward the pavilion, and it seems that he is coming to speak to you."

The young lady half raised herself on her arm to look round. The curtains of the pavilion were looped up all round so as to admit the air, and the lower part of a man could be seen, approaching slowly.

"It is he," murmured the girl, and a pleased smile lighted up her features. She sat up on the couch and dropped her little feet over the side on the soft carpet. They were very little feet, no longer than a child's, and quite bare. The elegance and refinement around had failed to accomplish shoes and stockings. But no one who saw those little white, blue-veined feet resting there could have carped at the absence of either. Rather would they have gone down on their knees to kiss those perfect feet, so slender and high-arched.

The girl stood up and tripped forward, just as the curtains at the entrance were parted. The lofty plumes of a warrior's bright helmet were stooped under the hanging silk, and the next moment the tall, graceful form of the Red Rajah stood beside Marguerite de Pavane.

Yes, it was our little Marguerite, shot up into maidenhood in those two short years under the equator. A white lily grown up among pools of blood; an angel from heaven among wild, human devils she seemed.

Pure and holy she was still, among those pirates. Those innocent dark eyes could never have looked out with such a guileless freedom, had any stain been on their owner's soul. There she stood beside the pirate chief, her little head just reaching as high as his heart, and he looking down upon her, with a sort of protecting and yearning fondness, inexpressibly loving.

The Red Rajah was handsomer than ever. He was clad in a species of chain armor, with undergarments of scarlet and gold, and glittered all over with costly jewels. His personal adornments were worth millions of dollars, so large and splendid were the jewels they bore.

Marguerite greeted him with all the freedom of a child, with a favorite uncle or cousin, and in French.

"And where have you been all the morning, monsieur? I have not seen you since you bid me good-night last night, and I am

bored to death with the tiresome time I have all alone."

"I fear you will have to stay alone for a little while yet, Marguerite," replied the Rajah, with a grave smile. "I have to leave you this afternoon and depart, to be gone for some days, perhaps weeks."

"Oh! what shall I do, all alone?" exclaimed Marguerite, with a pretty little pout; "must I stay in all the time?"

"Not now," he answered. "I shall have ample force to guard all the islands around here, and you can go out whenever you wish."

"But what can I do when you are away?" she asked, with the charming *moue* of a bewilderingly pretty, spoiled child. "I want you to stay to keep me company. I don't want you to go away and leave me. You must stay. There."

"I wish I could, little humming-bird," said the stately warrior, looking down tenderly. "I wish I could stay here forever with you. But I have enemies, Marguerite—enemies as many as powerful, and I must be off to chastise them before they become too dangerous."

"But why can not you make peace with them?" asked Marguerite, innocently. Child-woman as she was, she had no idea that the Rajah was a pirate. To her he was only a sort of sea Bedouin, a warlike sea-king who had many quarrels with his neighbors. She saw herself surrounded with luxuries which were delightful. She did not know of the ruthless plunder and bloodshed by which they were obtained. The Red Rajah took care not to let her know him as any thing but a prince.

"Why can not you make peace with them?" she asked.

The Rajah smiled.

"They will have no peace," he answered, "unless they can gain leave to burn down all our village here, and to shoot me and all my people. They have sent out fleets of junks and prahus, and several men-of-war of the English and Dutch, but they have never yet found me. Nor shall they yet. As soon as I hear that they propose to attack me, I attack them. And now I hear from Singapore, through one of my agents there, that certain of the merchants have resolved to sweep the Red Rajah from the seas. I go to show them their mistake."

"But why should they wish to harm you?" persisted Marguerite. "Did you ever harm them?"

The Rajah blushed for a moment—actually blushed at the home-thrust of the innocent child.

"Perhaps they think so," he answered, at last. "My fathers, before me, were rajahs of the sea, and claimed toll and tribute from all who sailed therein. If these Europeans would pay their toll cheerfully, I would not harm them; but they must needs fight; and if they get the worst of it, it is no fault of mine. But come, Marguerite. It is time I was going now. When I am away, remember that every thing on this island is yours. Your favorite horse, Mahlam, is ready for your use, with your dogs and falcons, if you wish to hunt. I leave behind me a swift prahu, under Keakoo, which will take you where you please among the islands. Keep up a good heart till I return, when I will tell you all about the brave fellows who came out to sweep the Red Rajah from the seas, and how they did it."

As he spoke he bent his lofty head to brush the pure-white forehead with his long moustache.

Marguerite put her white arms around his neck, as frankly as a child, but without exhibiting very much sorrow.

"Good-by," she said, brightly. "Be back soon. It will be very *triste* here when you are away."

"Good-by," Marguerite," he returned, holding her off for a few moments to look at her with great tenderness.

The girl returned the look with a smile. Then the Rajah drew her to him once more, kissed her forehead twice, and so left the tent abruptly. As he went, he heaved a deep sigh, and as he walked down to the boat, his head, usually so erect and proud, was sunk upon his breast in meditation.

Arrived at the little port, however, he flung off his reverie at once, and entered into the business before him with his whole heart.

The pirate fleet was full of men, and bustle and hurry was the order of the day. Water-bamboos were being hoisted aboard, provisions being packed, guns burnished, muskets, rifles and pistols polished bright. Half-naked Dyaks were sharpening lance-heads and war-axes; stately Malays poisoning their deadly krisses. When the Rajah appeared, a very few minutes sufficed to complete all the preparations for sea. Malay prahus, and especially those of the pirates, are got ready at short notice.

Inside of ten minutes the huge mat sails were hoisted, and swelling in the afternoon breeze, with a velocity that seemed incredible, in so light a wind, one after the other, the pirate prahus skimmed over the faintly-heaving sea, and ran off, wing-and-wing, like a flock of sea-gulls.

Marguerite had inserted her little feet in a pair of velvet slippers, to walk abroad, by this time. She stood on the green slope that led down from the pavilion to the beach, watching the sea-voyers' departure. What a pretty sight she thought it; and how much prettier the sight of herself standing watching!

She stood there, watching the rapid gliding of the brown lateen sails, as the little fleet stood off in single file, the large prahu of the Red Rajah at the head, with the scarlet flag fluttering at its peak. At last the intervening islands shut out the view, as one after another of the swift vessels rounded it, and disappeared.

Then Marguerite walked slowly back to her pavilion, thinking within herself what she should do to amuse herself. She was surrounded by obsequious slaves, all ready to do her bidding, and vie with each other to please her.

Sandala first suggested a ride, and her mistress was graciously pleased to assent. So the horses were brought up, slight-limbed, graceful creatures, with gorgeous saddles and trappings from Japan.

The beautiful Marguerite had learned to ride as well as a man, and in the same style. The loose trowsers of her dress were, indeed, well adapted for such a mode of exercise.

Light as a feather, she sprang into her seat, and calling for her favorite falcon, galloped away to the interior of the island, followed by half a dozen of her attendants.

Marguerite was passionately fond of riding and falconry.

The island on which she was, the central stronghold of the Red Rajah, was just the size for a convenient ride, measuring about

twelve miles across. It was diversified with lofty rounded hills, and deep valleys, full of small game; and on the north side it ended in a marsh, which was full of waterfowl.

Here Marguerite was fond of hawking, and toward it she directed her charger's steps, anticipating sport. Nor was she disappointed. She was able to fly her little falcon successfully at several teal and small ducks, and enjoyed beautiful sport. There is something so peculiarly fascinating in the action of falconry, that there is no wonder that our heroine was detained watching her falcon till very near sunset.

At last, after a tough battle in the clouds between the plucky little falcon and a duck twice his size, ending in the death of the latter, struck through the brain by the sharp talons of "Fire-eyes," the young lady turned her horse, and rode home, leaving her falconer to hood the little servant of her pleasure.

When she had climbed the hill, behind which her present home lay, she involuntarily drew the bridle to look behind her at the sea.

A broad path of gold lay across it, skirting the line of shore, and tipping every wave with fiery sparkles. Marguerite started, as she looked. About three miles from the island was a large brig, threading her way among the islets, whose cloud of snowy canvas appeared to be too large for the dark hull beneath. The stranger was coming as straight on as could be, apparently without any notion of danger.

Marguerite was astounded. She had not seen a vessel belonging to any civilized power ever since she had been on the island. Nothing but the piratical prahus, with their outlandish rig, had met her eyes.

At once it crossed her mind that they must be the Rajah's enemies come after him. What else could a vessel be doing there among those islands, where every stone concealed an enemy at ordinary times?

But the stranger appeared to have no fears, for he held on his course unflinchingly, till he had rounded a mountainous island, about a mile further on, when the wood-covered eminence concealed his sails from her view.

Marguerite sat on her horse, looking at the spot where the brig had vanished, till she was recalled to herself by her attendants riding up with the falcon. They had not seen the strange vessel, and she forbore to say any thing about it. She knew that in a very few hours the whole piratical population of the islands would be roused to attack the intruder, if seen by any of them. She did not wish to be accessory to the attack, herself. So she turned her horse and galloped back to the port, where lay the swift prahu under Kakoo's orders. She found every thing quiet. Nothing had been seen by any one there, and the shades of night were closing in. Marguerite retired to rest, full of conflicting thoughts.

She had been perfectly happy while on the island, treated like a queen, and yet she felt now as if she wanted to escape—a certain longing to be free, to see civilization once more, to look hold of her, and with them the remembrance of the handsome Monsieur Claude, who "used to be so kind to her when she was a child," she said to herself.

When she was a child! Why, she was so still, in all but age and physical development. And the sight of the strange brig in a moment undid all the work of the Red Rajah, who had been slowly winning her heart to himself, with unexampled delicacy and kindness. The child forgot every thing in a moment, but her old friend Claude, and she felt certain that he was in that vessel, coming to rescue her. "He could do anything," thought Marguerite.

CHAPTER XI.

STEALING A PRINCESS.

MARGUERITE had let her book drop on her lap, and was gazing dreamily out into the night. She was all alone. Presently she began to talk to herself.

"It must have been him," she murmured; "who else would come here among these wild people? Oh! my God! take care of Monsieur Claude, and bring him here quick to me. He was so kind to poor Marguerite, long, long ago, when the savages killed poor, poor papa. Oh! Monsieur Dieu! send him to me quickly, for I want to go away. And yet the Rajah has been so kind to me. Why should I wish to leave him? Yes, but Monsieur Claude was papa's friend, and I did love him so. He was so kind to Marguerite!"

"Marguerite!"

The word came like an echo to her speech. For a moment she thought it was. She laughed.

"What a funny echo! How did I never hear it before?"

Then she paused and listened. Again came the voice, soft and low.

"Marguerite!"

The girl sprang up erect in a moment, her eyes dilated, her head on one side to catch the sound. She stood the picture of intense attention.

"Marguerite!"

A third time came the voice. There was no more doubt now. The child-woman threw up her eyes to heaven with delight, clasped her hands and faltered out:

"Oh, Grand Dieu! C'est lui!"

Claude himself pushed aside the curtains and entered the pavilion, and the next instant the lost Marguerite was found again—found and weeping on his bosom.

"Oh, Monsieur Claude!" she was saying; "I knew you would come. I knew you would come at last. Oh! I am so glad. And you have come to take me to my aunt Eulalie, at Pondicherry—have you not? Oh! Monsieur Claude! it is not horrid of the wicked savages to kill poor papa? And our poor mother has died since; soon after we came here. She was buried close by. And the Rajah has been so kind to me, since he rescued me from those wicked savages. He has made me the princess over all these islands when he is away, and my own papa could not have been kinder. And yet, do you know, Monsieur Claude, he will not tell me his name. I call him Rajah, and he tells me, if I want another name, to call him Lidal Sapuloh. But that only means 'ten tongues,' you know. Oh! Monsieur Claude! I've learned ever so much since you used to teach me in the poor old Philomene!"

Thus the glad child ran on, delighted to see her old friend once more. Claude, for his part, was in a whirl of wonder and admiration. Marguerite was grown so beautiful, so winning, so immensely changed from the quiet, slender child she had been when

he saw her last. Slender and small she was still, but so beautifully rounded, with a shape that a sculptor might have modeled for Titania. The rough wanderer felt a strange rising at his heart, when he found this lovely little being, nestling so confidently in his arms.

She was so pretty and so innocent, a woman in appearance, an innocent child in her manner. Presently she began to ask him how he came to find her out, and where he got his vessel. Then he learned for the first time that she had seen him from the top of the hill, and that hers had been the form of the distant horsewoman he had seen.

He told her in a few words that he had been cruising in the neighborhood in search of pirates, and had come there by accident.

"Pirates!" she exclaimed; "but there are no pirates here. My lord, the Red Rajah, rules over all these islands, and he is no pirate. He has many enemies, he tells me."

"He has," said Peyton, dryly; "but did it never strike you that a man whose hand is against every man, might have every man's hand against him; and so be a pirate?"

"I don't know," said Marguerite; "but if he is a pirate, he has been as kind to me as an honest man, and never gave me cause to regret being in his power."

"Tell me, Marguerite, who is this Red Rajah, that I have heard of so often as the scourge of the Archipelago? You have known him. Who is he?" asked Claude, with interest.

"I know no more than you," she answered; "sometimes he tells me he is a Turk, an Egyptian, an Armenian, who has studied in Paris. He talks French as well as I do. But I end in saying that I can not tell, for every day he appears different. He may be a Jew, perhaps. Papa told me they go everywhere."

"Whoever he is, you have saved his life," answered Claude; "but you must not stay another hour in his power. Where is he now?"

"He went away to the south, with all his fleet, this very day," she answered; "news came from Singapore that his enemies were afoot, and the Rajah sailed to pursue them."

"It was me he was after," said the Virginian, laughing. "Well, if he catches me to the south, it will be funny. Now, Marguerite, will you go with me?"

"Surely I will," said the girl; "but why go now? I have power over all this island. Every one here obeys my will. To-morrow morning we will sail away quietly from here, and leave word for my lord, the Rajah, that we are gone. Then he can not say that Marguerite deceived him."

"But the people here will not let you depart, foolish child," said Claude, impatiently. "You are deceived in them. As long as you do not try to leave, they will obey you, but they will not let you go. I tell you, child, they are pirates. This mysterious Red Rajah, whom no one knows, is the chief of all the pirates of the Archipelago. If you wait till morning, there will be blood shed."

But the girl would not be persuaded. Every soul on the island had bowed before her, and why should they now disobey her? Claude was reluctantly forced to yield to her arguments, and return to his vessel. He reached the boat waiting for him, without molestation, and was rowed off to the brig, where he turned in, sickily enough.

The brig's masts were quite invisible from the shore, being hidden behind a rocky islet. In the morning Claude was hidden among the trees on the summit of the islet, watching the shore and the village. He saw a few women come out of the houses first, and then the children began to toddle about.

At last the crew of the prahu were seen to stir, and Claude perceived that there were not more than twenty able-bodied men in prahu and village.

He waited impatiently for some signs of Marguerite's presence. He had resolved that he would carry her off at any risk, and began to doubt very seriously whether he ought not to bombard the village at once.

But just as his patience was giving way, he saw the well-known figure, glittering and bright with jewels, tripping out of the gilded pavilion.

Behind the pavilion, and higher up the hill, were the lofty towers of the Rajah's palace, hidden among clustering thickets of roses. He saw the girl go toward this fairy-like structure, which he now noticed for the first time.

The light, tough bamboo had been utilized here to the last extent of which it was capable, to make a lofty palace as light as a dream.

Tall minarets, airy galleries, cool piazzas, and broad, spacious halls, were hidden away among the trees and flowers, so that you failed to see them at first. When they were noticed, the effect was wonderfully airy and picturesque.

Peyton saw the island princess going toward this palace. She was soon surrounded by crowds of slaves, to whom she appeared to be giving orders. After this, she turned round, and descended to the little village.

Claude could see the women and children saluting, as she passed. The child had not deceived him. She seemed to be the queen of the pirates, for they bowed before her. She came to the jitty, and all the men of the prahu prostrated themselves before her.

She appeared to be giving them some orders, for they began to bustle about, and get the vessel's sails out of the clumsy gaskets they were secured with. Pretty soon down came a procession of servants from the palace, each loaded with a bundle, with which they went on board.

Peyton watched the proceedings with wonder, along with Mr. Rose, mate of the brig.

"What the devil is the little thing about?" ejaculated Rose. "Eh, by Jove, captain! She's going to put to sea in that queer-looking craft, there, I verily believe. And if she does, we shall never catch her."

Peyton did not answer for a moment. He was thinking of what could the girl be doing. At last he slapped his knee with a loud exclamation.

"I have it!" he cried. "Rose, did you ever read Shakespeare?"

"I should rather think so."

"Do you remember when Jessica runs away with Lorenzo, what she does besides?"

"Takes all old Shylock's money, to be sure. And serve him right, too, the old hunk."

"That's it, Rose. But I tell you what, I'm getting nervous about this business. Those Malay devils will never let her take them off in that prahu. How she has fooled them so far is more than I can tell."

"Well, captain," said Rose, quietly; "all

you have to do is to move out, and support her, with the long-boat. I'll get up steam, and follow her in a jiffy."

"A good idea, Rose," said the Virginian, delighted. "We'll put it into execution at once."

The long-boat still lay alongside, and the wild-looking Malay crew leaped into it in a moment.

Peyton thought to himself, as he surveyed them, that it might be hard to tell which side looked most piratical.

He pulled to the edge of the island, around whose corner he watched carefully for some minutes. The last of the train of servants had just deposited his bundle in the prahu, and was returning up the hill. The slight, glittering figure of Marguerite was standing on the pier-head, directing every thing.

When everybody's attention was busily engrossed with his work, the long-boat suddenly shot out from the shelter of the island, and pulled toward the prahu.

They had crossed about half the distance, when a loud yell from the Malay pirates warned them that they were discovered. The rowers pulled as hard as they could, and were already near the pirates when the latter scattered in all directions, and dived into the hold.

In a moment more they came pouring up, gun in hand, and opened a scattering fire on the boat.

Peyton was kneeling in the bow beside his murderous mitrailleuse, when the first bullets began to whizz. He saw Marguerite run away into the village before he returned a shot.

Then, taking his station at about a hundred yards from the prahu, he ordered his men to stop rowing. Training his gun to sweep the pirate's deck, he commenced to turn the crank.

No one who has not seen the American mitrailleuse at work, can form an idea of the horrible effects of its fire.

An incessant stream of fire and smoke, with a rattling repetition of cracks, as if a regiment were firing, burst from the pirate's deck, clearing it of foes in a moment. It seemed but an instant before they were yelling and shooting. Now they had disappeared, struck down in an instant by the leaden rain, mechanically and pitilessly accurate.

With a yell of triumph the Malays resumed their oars, and dashed forward, boarding the prahu in short order.

When they reached her deck it was untenanted, save by shattered corpses and mutilated men, writhing and groaning. Claude leaped aboard, and then calling on his men to follow, dashed on to the pier, and ran up the street of the village, now all alive with fleeing women and children.

"Marguerite!" he shouted. "Marguerite!"

A light figure came running from between the houses, and he clasped her in his arms.

"Oh! how frightened I am!" she exclaimed. "Why did you do this? I told you not to."

"Never mind now," he answered; "we have no time to lose, for every inmate of these accursed islands will be up and after us, before three hours are over. Come."

He hurried her on board the prahu, which had been so unceremoniously cleared, and placed her in the cabin.

"Stay there till I tell you all's safe," he said, hurriedly, and went outside. He found his boat's crew employed in true Malay fashion, reckless of life. They were pitching overboard the wounded as well as dead pirates. So many of the Malays had suffered in former times from the cruelty of the Red Rajah and his men that Peyton was hardly surprised at their vindictiveness. But they had no time to lose. He knew that his enemies were many and cruel. The Avenger had got in her anchor, and was steaming slowly up and down outside.

Claude had resolved to carry off the prahu with him, and make for Singapore.

At sunset, the same evening, the dark lateen sails of the foremost of a line of prahus hove in sight. It was the Red Rajah, returning from his fruitless search. The first object he saw was the smoke of his own burning palace.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 92.)

The Flaming Talisman:

OR,
THE UNFULFILLED VOW.

BY A. P. MORRIS, JR.,

AUTHOR OF "THE BLACK CRESCENT," "WOODWIND," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XVII.—CONTINUED.

"HERVIN, come here," continued the occupant of the barouche to Gerard Henric, who was looking up the street, after Reginald.

"Well, Orle, what will you have?" he asked, going to her.

"When I asked you of Reginald Darnley, last night, you said you knew nothing of his whereabouts."

"I did," he replied, with an uneasy movement.

"I doubted the truth of your answer, then; for, I reasoned that, if you had taken pains to learn of his departure, and would follow him, you would also keep close watch upon him. You told me a falsehood. You have deceived me. Chance favors me; for here I find you walking arm in arm with him. Now, tell me where he lives—and speak the truth."

"Orle, why will you keep this up? Let him go."

not believe her denials; he will turn his back upon her. How I hate him—more and more, whenever I hear her speak his name! I almost incline to assist Meg Semper in an opportunity to strike at his heart without waiting longer! It would rid me of a formidable rival. Ah! how I have tormented him. My revenge is growing sweet, indeed. Silly fool! Had he but looked at the paper, he would have seen that it contained no such notice. Only a trick of mine, to make him writhe the more. Ha! ha! how sweet is revenge! My cheek is beginning to smart less. Soon the wound will heal, when I shall strike the final blow!

As the characters in this scene disappeared, a man who had been leaning against a tree, in the corner, whistled about, and gazed after the barouche.

He had been a sly listener and witness to all that passed.

This party raised the handle of a white umbrella to his lips, and mused, aloud: "That's the same black-eyed vixen I saw at the house in Richmond. Now, what the deuce is she doing here? So, she's well acquainted with that old villain. What a nest of 'em I'm unearthing. A regularly organized ring, it seems, of genteel, aristocratic rascals—men and female. By George! where does she live? I must know that, and then I'll have 'em all netted."

As this latter thought struck him, he lingered not another second, but sped away in pursuit.

He pulled his hat tighter on his head, and clutched his umbrella with a firm grip. He could not help recalling to mind a former race after a barouche, and the incidents connected with it.

"Now, if this one serves me, as that one did," he resolved, mentally, "I'll get in, and never chase another vehicle as long as I live—don't care who's in it."

The barouche proceeded leisurely along, and when Crewly gained a position abreast of it, he experienced no difficulty in the chase.

The hat slid to the back of his head, to let more air play upon his temples, and he kept a Bandanna handkerchief whisking spasmodically around his throat, and over his face.

"That's more like it," he exclaimed, when he found it an easy matter to keep pace with the object of his pursuit. "Dreadful warm, though—hot!"

"In front of the Kirkwood House, at Twelfth street, he met Waldron.

"Where to, Crewly?" asked the young man, detaining him.

"See that barouche, there?" was the interrogatory reply, pointing out to the street.

"Yes."

"Well, I'm after it. Look at her good. Know her? Ever see her before, eh?"

"The same girl we saw at the large house in Richmond," said Waldron, slowly, as he caught a momentary glimpse of the beautiful face.

"Exactly. She's one of 'em,"

"One of who?"

"The gang—the don't stop me; she'll get away. I want to cage her, too, when we grab 'em. Looks like a fascinating syren—a receiver of stolen goods, perhaps; a head center; queen of thieves, etc., etc. Go back to the hotel. See you to-night, and she started off at a rapid gait, to make up for lost time.

Henry Waldron gazed wonderingly after the lawyer, until the latter's fluttering duster was no longer visible in the throng, and then he entered the Kirkwood.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE SPIDER ON THE WALL.

"Bear firmly; yet a few more days. And thy hard trial will be past."—ANDREW NORTON.

After the departure of Orle Deice, Cecilia fell to thinking.

Impressed with the awe of solitude, and the naturally strange feelings of one abruptly taken from home and friends, to be surrounded by mysterious company—for those with whom she was thus thrown, were, to her, mysterious; and the more so, owing to the brief revelation Orle had made—her mind, confused by the excitement of her situation, wandered in shadowy channels which left her surmising, questioning, doubting.

Thus she sat, when Orle had left her; her attitude one of deepest reverie, and her gaze rested vacantly on the sunrays that played through the half-open window on the figured carpet.

The house was on Seventeenth street, and, as we have stated, near the canal. Beyond the tow-path shone the silvery waters of the Potomac, whose marshes were waving in the gentle breeze, like an overgrown woodland of the Naiads; and among the green trees that lined the shore, birds were revelling in the gayety of song.

To Cecilia's meditations wafted many a glad carol or murmuring whir, and cool airs winged across the trembling bosom of the river, flamed and played with her wealth of golden tresses.

Over the scenes of the past few days; back to those loved ones in Richmond, who, notwithstanding all assurance, must long, heart-aching, for her return; to Reginald Darnley; to Henry Waldron; and the weird something that was to decide her choice in love; to the beautiful girl through whose solicitation she was there, and the singular story she had half told—at random, fancy flew, and the moments lapsed unheeded in lightning speed.

Suddenly, she uttered a cry of horror. At her feet, in the sunlight, was a monstrous spider—its horrible little eyes fairly snapping fire. It was an ugly thing; a large body of brownish color—like a tiny, inflated bug—and head of bristled gray. Its numerous legs projected above the back, elbowing thence to the floor.

It began to move toward her. Powerless to move—as if riveted by some irresistible magnetism; speechless, her gaze fixed upon it, she drew back till she leaned against the window-frame, and her features overspread with an ashen hue.

It advanced; its two sharp, pincer-claws struck rapidly together, as if in anticipation of a bloody feast; it crawled upon her slipper, then on to her dress; presently, it rose above her knee, and, pausing there for a moment, its body puffed out larger, and the poisonous mouth opened viciously. Cecilia scarcely breathed. Chained in a dread spell, her heart stood still.

The spider moved again. Slowly, slowly upward; then it was upon her shoulder. The flesh of the neck shrank as that cold, clammy, dragging object was felt upon it; yet, she had no strength, she could not strike off the fearful monster!

"But, it continued to climb. Up, up—then it was upon her head. Wonderful preservation!—it had left her, and was now crawling up the window-frame."

The spell was broken. With a shriek she bounded from her seat, and, in the same instant the door opened, and Meg Semper entered.

Even the presence of the hag was a relief, after passing such an ordeal, and Cecilia ran to her, grasping her by the arm.

Meg, not understanding the movement, tore the other's hands from their hold, and, with a jerk and a push, sent her reeling across the apartment.

"Devils a loose!" she cried, shrilly; "what's the matter with you? What do you catch hold of me that way for, eh? Are you going crazy? Do you want to tear me to pieces? I think you'd like to scratch my eyes out. Take care—I don't think too much of you yet, my pretty lady. It's a favor that I haven't choked you since we came here—and I might do it now if I wanted to; it's a good chance. Take care how you grab me that way again—you scratch-cat—or you'll find out what I am."

"I know well enough what you are," Cecilia said, with a shudder, as she retired to a further part of the room.

"And what am I, eh?" demanded Meg Semper, with a harsh snarl in her cracked voice, and advancing toward the girl.

"Keep off!" commanded Cecilia, sternly, returning the fiery gaze of the hag with an unwavering glance.

"But, you said you knew what I was. Now, what am I, eh?"

"I tell you to keep off. Leave this room—"

"Oh! how long since you've been mistress here? Now, I know you're crazy!" still advancing, step by step, in a menacing way.

"You had best keep away from me, Meg Semper."

"You'd better answer me!" hissed Meg, slowly producing her murderous knife, while her eyes glittered threateningly.

But, the way Cecilia met this, surprised the hag. From the bosom of her dress, she too, drew forth a sharp, glistening blade of steel, and, while the look of some deep resolve settled on her face, she took a quick step toward her persecutor.

Unprepared for this, Meg Semper retreated. Cecilia smiled sarcastically. She concluded, from this, that the hag was a coward.

"Come, what's this? Are you at the girl again?" it was Nemil who uttered the growling words; and, turning to the African, who stood in the doorway, Meg screamed:

"See, Nemil! she's got a knife!"

"Then, let her keep it. She'll hurt nobody without a cause."

"But, where'd she get it, eh? Where? Look!"

"No matter. Let her keep it—and do you remain away from its point, and cease your torments, or I'll stand guard over her, and w-r-i-n-g your n-e-e-k every time you come too near."

"By Satan! you're her champion—you'll fight me, too!"

"Rest your tongue—it makes my ears sore."

"But, we must take the knife away from her," persisted Meg.

"I tell you, no; and I say, leave off. Rattle-tat-tat-er-rit-rit, like a furnace-hammer, until I tire with hearing you talk so much. Put a stick in your lips, and die, if you won't cease without. What brought you here?"

"I came to see if she wanted some lunch."

"And began with the threat of a knife? Bah!—go, now," and the black face wore an expression of contempt.

"Do you want dinner?" addressing Cecilia, briefly.

"You may bring me a light lunch, if you will," she answered.

He vented a grunt, and followed Meg Semper, who was moving sullenly away.

As the hag passed the door, a small, dark object fell from the ceiling, and struck upon her head. She jumped back, uttered a startled cry, that was half one of pain, then stamped something beneath her foot.

"Well, and what's the matter now?" demanded Nemil, colliding with her. "By the tail of the devil! you're always screeching like a hurt cat—and I tell you, I tire of it!"

"Nasty thing! It bit me!"

"What?"

"A spider! It bit me on the head. There!—with a final stamp—" it won't bite again, I guess. My head aches already."

"Huh!—I go on."

As soon as they were gone, Cecilia restored her knife to its sheath.

"To think that I should ever have to handle such a weapon!" she murmured. "Orle Deice was not wrong when she forced it upon me and told me I might find it a welcome ally in her absence. How I tremble before that terrible hag! And, how she seems to hate me! Ah! yes, Orle was telling me why, before she went out. I will learn more of her when she comes back. What a cloud of mystery seems floating around her!"

While partaking of a tempting lunch, which Nemil brought, Orle returned.

"I'll join you in the meal," she said, pleasantly, seating herself at the table. "My barouche is at the door, and I must be off again at once."

"This is unexpected, is it not?"

"Yes. But, I may not be gone over a couple of hours. When I come back, I want to talk with you."

"You will finish the narrative you began this morning."

"Yes. Were you disturbed at all while I was away?"

"A great deal," answered Cecilia, promptly. "That fearful woman came here and tried to make me miserable by threats and menaces. But for the weapon you gave me, I fear I might have suffered much at her hands."

Orle frowned, and the dark eyes sparkled with angry thought.

"She threatened you?"

"Yes."

"What for?"

"I really can not imagine. I'm sure I offered no encouragement to her approach."

"I'll speak to Nemil. He'll see to it that she does not come near you again," Orle said, decidedly.

Shortly arising from her seat, the beauty banded:

"A bracelet of gold, that you can not guess where I am going."

"Where?"

"To see Reginald Darnley."

Cecilia started.

"I'll fix it so he shall come here to-night," added she; "then you shall see if I have

not told you the truth regarding his love."

With a further assurance that Meg Semper should not again annoy her, she left her.

As she walked away from Cecilia's room, Meg Semper came out of a closet on the opposite side of the hall, and looked after her.

"Fix it so that he shall come here to-night!" she muttered, using Orle's words to Cecilia. "And if he does come—now, may Satan seize me if I don't sink my knife in his heart! I'll do it before he can get to her, and before the cursed Talisman can stay me! I will! So, she gave the knife to the girl, eh? Now, Orle Deice, beware!—don't fool with Meg Semper; for, if you do, though I swore to stay by you and never offer you harm, I'll kill you, too! I will!" and she shook her fist savagely at the retreating form of the beauty.

Then, as she moved along the entry, she pressed her claw-like hands to her temples, and continued, in muttering strain:

"My head! my head! It aches!—it aches! Devil eat that spider! Its bite was poisonous, I fear!"

CHAPTER XIX.

A WOMAN'S ARMS.

"Peace is the atmosphere I breathe, And my calm mind goes to her dewy bower."

REGINALD wished to avoid meeting Orle Deice. Satisfied, as he was, that she was the sole cause of all his troubles, and that, but for her, he would not now be weighed down by the dreadful gloom of a murderer's life, he hated sight of her—hated thoughts of her.

When he fled so abruptly—as if pursued by a goblin whose presence chilled the veins and balked the senses—he hoped to escape her entirely, and it was with a feeling of intense satisfaction he looked back and ascertained that she was not in pursuit of him.

Half forgetting Gerard Henricq—in fact, careless as to that party's movements, he returned straightway to his rooms and locked himself in.

Solitude had many fascinations for him—he could think, could brood upon the miseries of fate, with pictures and characters of his mind's creation to surround him; and melancholy musings oft stilled the unrest of his conscience with an indescribable influence.

The day wore on.

Early in the afternoon, a servant knocked at his door, and informed him that a visitor was in the parlor.

"Man or woman?" he asked, gloomily, thinking at the same time it might be Orle Deice or Gerard Henricq.

"Woman, sir," was the servant's reply.

Reginald started.

"Is there no name?—did you not bring a card?"

"No, sir."

"Can you describe her?" frowning darkly.

"A rather slender woman, sir, dressed in black—with very bright eyes and a handsome face."

"It is she!" interrupted the young man; and he fell to musing. "By Heaven! she must have tracked me, after all. She followed me; else, how discover my residence? What do I do?—have her sent away? Ay, but would she go? No—it is useless to deny her; she is spirited, and will persist until the people in the house begin to wonder. Fate—fate—why is this being brought again upon my path? I had hoped that we were parted forever."

"What shall I tell her?" inquired the servant, who waited patiently in the doorway.

"Admit her."

Orle Deice was ushered in.

Her beauty of face and form seemed even greater at this moment. The lustrous eyes sparkled doubly bright, the full lips, like half-opened rosebuds; were moist in their dewy sweetness; her raven tresses were superbly arranged with jeweled pins; and, combining her costly and magnificent attire of gauzes, laces and illusions, the picture was that of a new-born goddess, whose advent was heralded by breaths of dreamy perfume.

"Reginald!" she smiled and extended her dimpled hands.

"Well, Orle—you here? was the cold rejoinder, turning from her as he spoke.

"Yes, I have found you. But I had a hard hunt."

"I would it had been longer and less successful." Colder still.

She looked at him in wonderment.

"Is this your greeting, Reginald?"

"I have none other to offer. Why are you here?"

"Why am I here? What a question! Why, to see you."

The bright beauty of her face was losing color, and her voice faltered.

"And now that you do see me, have I altered much since we last met? I look ill, do I not? Well, I am. But you see me, and—I beg you to depart. You can have nothing to keep you here."

"Why, how strangely you talk! You are not yourself!"

"Strange? True, I am not myself. Please begone; your presence is distasteful." And he seated himself near a window, carelessly turning over the leaves of a novel.

Orle contemplated him in astonishment. Was this the man she loved so deeply—the one who oft had whispered of an enduring affection, placed his heart where her own could feel its beating, snatched kisses in myriad from the lips she willingly yielded up to him? Could this be Reginald Darnley, whom she so idolized, and whose warm ardor had vied with her own in vowing castled love? What meant this change? Why this distant bearing toward her?

"Reginald—what—what does this mean?" The large, black eyes were opened wide, and the music of her voice was tremulous.

He closed the book, and slowly raised his gaze to hers.

"Orle Deice, will you leave me? You have already wrecked my life; why add to its gloom by your presence? Go!"

Her bosom heaved; something was cutting at her heart.

"Reginald!" she said, in a tremored whisper; "what do you mean?"

"Mean?—starting to his feet—" I mean that I do not wish you near me. You are no less than a beautiful fiend, Orle Deice! You have ruined me! You have deceived me! You have destroyed every golden faith I once placed in your professions of love! And, if you will but think, you will see how you have wrought this. It is needless for me to tell you."

"No, no, no—there is a mistake; there is something wrong, some cruel misunder-

standing! Reginald, you are stabbing me! Each word you speak, is a knife-thrust at my bosom! Ruined you? Deceived you?—never! In Heaven's name! explain."

She hurried to his side, as she concluded this brief, passionate outburst, and would have thrown her arms around his neck. But he cast her off.

"Orle Deice, let me ask you what you mean by this hypocrisy? Dare you hope that there is one particle even of friendship for you in my breast, after what you have done?"

"Reginald, as Heaven is my witness, I have done nothing!" she cried, passionately. "Oh! tell me—tell me of what I am accused!"

His brow became stern; his eyes seemed lighting with their old brilliancy, and his lip quivered. A strange feeling crept over him as she made that declaration.

"Done nothing?" he repeated; then grasping her by the wrist, in a hold that was painful to her, he hissed:

"I once borrowed a sum of money from you."

"Yes," in a panting accent, while she trembled beneath his fierce glance.

"You said I need never return it, if I did not choose."

"Yes, yes; and I meant it, Reginald."

"Meant it! Did you not send a negro to my father's house, a few days ago, with a note bearing your signature?—and, in that note did you not demand payment of the money?"

"Reginald!" she gasped, interrupting him; "as I hope for peace in death—no, I did not."

Reginald staggered from her, and clutched a chair for support.

"Never! Do you believe me?" And now the arms that stole about his neck remained there.

For some time the young man's mind was in a giddy whirl. A strange noise seemed ringing in his ears; the lovely face that looked up to his, was but dimly seen.

"Can it be, I have so wrongly judged you?" he uttered, chokingly.

"You have, Reginald!—you have!" clinging tighter to him. "Tell me, now, what has happened. Let us clear away this terrible mystery."

When he had calmed himself, he told her all. Orle was dumb in amazement. She knew nothing of the letter, and—oh! a sudden light flashed upon her, she guessed the source of all the trouble. But she did not impart this guess to Reginald.

Then she appeared to be thinking upon what he had said. When he spoke of poisoning his father, a shudder convulsed her frame; but she did not stir—her thoughts were fastened upon that very subject. Something perplexed her.

"Reginald, you say you tried to poison him, on Tuesday night?"

"Sh! not so loud, Orle. Yes—I did not only try, but I did poison him!" glancing nervously around the room, as if fearful lest some eavesdropper should hear the dread confession.

"And have you heard any thing of it since?" still in that thoughtful way.

"Yes. To-day in one of the city papers, a telegram from Richmond spoke of it."

"Yet I saw him on Wednesday afternoon, before I left Richmond, walking the street."

Reginald's eyes were starting; his features whitened; he cried, in a hoarse whisper:

"You saw him, Orle?—you saw him on Wednesday afternoon? At what time?"

"It must have been nearly five o'clock. I was on my way to the depot."

"And he looked well?"

The young man gasped forth this inquiry with a wild eagerness.

He remembered that Gerard Henricq had promised the death of Mervin Darnley, within ten hours after drinking the poison.

If Orle had seen the manufacturer at five o'clock on Wednesday, then the diabolical plot must have failed. In his state of acute remorse, this hope was joy-inspiring. A new warmth welled in his breast.

"Are you sure?" he questioned eagerly—"are you sure you could not have been mistaken?"

"Quite sure, Reginald; for I know your father well at sight."

When Orle Deice left him, he was an altered man. His form resumed the old carriage of confidence, a flash was on his cheek; in his face was an expression completely banishing the dejected look which had settled there in the few days past.

Her visit had served to drive away the somber clouds of despair, and leave him happy in the belief that a kind Providence had intervened in some way to save him. Something told him he was innocent of the crime he had striven at.

His brow was clear, his mind composed, as he walked to and fro; and suddenly he exclaimed, with vehemence:

"Now, Gerard Henricq—don't get from my sight! No longer your slave, to be tortured and played with as you will, but once more a Darnley! And Orle—generous girl—made me promise to draw on her for funds. We shall soon bid adieu to these dark scenes, and seek bliss amid the sunlight of a foreign clime. For I love her best—I love her best! I love Cecilia, too; but it is not such a love as that I bear Orle, and I would see him smiling if I married her in his feelings. And I know she would be my wife, despite her father, if I asked it. Orle! Orle!—But I am thinking too fast. I shall see her to-night; she has given me her direction. Oh! once again those pleasant moments—how eager I am to welcome them! And why should I not be? Not a murderer—ha! ha! ha!—but a man! a man! Ah! my brain—how it whirls around!"

(To be continued—commenced in No. 90.)

The Mustangs:

A TALE OF THE CROSS TIMBERS.

CHAPTER XIX.

TOO LATE.

The sun had set for more than an hour, and the whole canopy of heaven was covered with bright-twinkling stars. The prairie, sprinkled with little mottes of timber here and there, lay silent around, only disturbed by the not unmelancholy howling of the prairie-wolves, as they sat in a great circle without, watching the camp-fire of the Regulators, longing for the scraps.

The nightly serenade of the coyotes is the constant companion of the prairie-traveler. The coyote seems to howl for his own amusement, or as a habit, and only stops

when disturbed. Therefore is he an excellent sentry for the lonely trapper, warning him of the approach of strangers, whether human or quadruped, by the sudden silence that ensues.

The Regulators had gone into camp for the night, prairie-fashion. Their horses were herded close to them, with an armed sentry to stand guard over them, the animals themselves being hobbled. Later in the evening they would be brought in, and picketed close to their owners, when sleep-time came; but at present the men were gathered around the great fire, each cooking his supper, while the animals fed under the sentry's eye.

TO FRED—ON A BIRTH-DAY OCCASION.

BY JOE JOE, JR.

In looking o'er the family scroll
Of births, and so forth, *ad infinitum*,
I nearly lost my self-control
To find recorded there this item:
"At ten o'clock, November first,
Year Eighteen hundred—balance missing,
Joseph Demosthenes De Hurst,
The smallest Jot, God bless the blessing."

Now, I'll expect you on that day;
So, write for benefit of clients
Upon your slate—"Shall be away
A week upon a tour of science."
The man who hesitates is—well,
Is worse than lost, so mind you hurry.
Brown will be here, and Smith and Bill,
And also we'll have—Tom and Jerry!

Behold, I stand in man's estate
An older one but not a wiser;
My chances of becoming great
Are truly very high—and dry, sir;
I need your sympathy, my boy,
Because, you see, I'm growing older,
And though you can not give me joy,
We'll give to dull care the cold shoulder.

Come, we will try to give you cheer,
In spite of unpropitious season;
We'll have a talk on all things dear,
"With flow of words and feast of reason."
We'll have some hours of rarest sport,
Nor need how fast those hours will travel;
Our joyful college days, in short,
So long wound up, we will unravel.

At night we dance, the beauteous maids
From all the country round you'll see here;
Kate, whom you loved, how romance fades!
Has long since married, but she'll be here!
The folks at home are hard at work,
And every hand is in the dough, sir.
They keep me running like a Turk
Between the baker and the grocer.

And every thing is upside down;
To be brought round in perfect order;
A host will be here from the town,
And all the girls upon the border.
Come, but if you must stay at home,
Attending to your duties, greater;
Rather than not to see you come,
I'll set the day a little later!

The Step-Brothers.

A STORY OF COLONIAL TIMES.

BY CAPT. CHARLES HOWARD.

ONE sultry summer evening in the year 1675—a dark year for the brave colonists of Massachusetts—two young men confronted each other upon the shore of the lovely Narragansett Bay.

"William," said one, whose countenance beamed with great intellectuality, "I am astounded at your unbrotherly conduct. For fifteen years we have shared the same bed beneath my father's roof; ate at the same table; shared the little sorrows and joys of childhood with each other, and grew to manhood, side by side. And now, because the fairest woman in Massachusetts has promised to become my bride, you curse me, and swear that I shall never wed her," and the speaker gazed reproachfully into his step-brother's face.

"And I will keep that oath, if you persist in your present course," was the response; and William Hartley clenched his effeminate hands until the untrimmed nails sorrowfully wounded the soft, white palms.

"For shame, William!" cried William. "Though you have been my companion for years, Volney, you do not know the heart that beats within my bosom. I have loved Editha Wagner a long time—loved her in secret, and in secret worshiped her. Last night I made bold to approach the haughty beauty, and craved the hand I have worshiped so long. And what think you she told me?"

"That she was my promised bride."

"Yes, and in the bitterness of my disappointment, I cursed her, and hurled maledictions on your head, for were it not for your hated form, I would be the happiest mortal on earth."

Volney Mather smiled.

"Smile over your victory," cried William, with a sneer; "but the day is coming in which you will curse the hour when she gave you the betrothal kiss."

"I fear not a coward's threats."

"A coward! In the future you shall eat these words or die," and William Hartley strode from his step-brother, livid with rage.

"This hour," he continued, suddenly pausing and confronting Volney, "I leave the roof that has sheltered me so many years—whose memories now I curse, because you are associated with them. I blaspheme the holy Sabbath day that gave you birth. I go but to return, in the fire and smoke of battle."

"What mean you, William?" exclaimed Volney, rushing forward.

"I mean that Philip, the great King of the Wampanoags, has declared for war. He has sent his women and children to the Narragansetts for protection; and the coming week will witness the inauguration of hostilities."

"This is news to me; but I can not credit it," said Volney. "Philip is too chivalrous to unseal the hatchet."

"You shall see, disbeliever!" said William, hurrying away. "This day I do I alienate myself from my people. I join the dusky cohorts of the red king, and Editha Wagner becomes the bride of the White Chief."

"Go!" shouted Volney Mather. "Go, base-hearted renegade, brother of mine no longer; and when the war-cloud bursts, I pray that we may meet in the red field of battle."

The speaker watched his step-brother disappear from sight, and then retraced his steps to Swanzy.

The young renegade's prophesy regarding the bursting of the war-cloud, was fulfilled.

The ensuing week witnessed the carnival of destruction. Issuing from his wooded fortresses, Philip led his red demons upon the unprotected settlers, and the smoke of burning cabins was discernible on every hand. While the feeble government was arming for the conflict, the work of destruction continued, and at times it seemed as though the entire colony would be stricken from existence by the gory tomahawk.

Among the red hounds stalked William Hartley, disguised as a Wampanoag chief! When the news of the Indian massacre reached Swanzy, Volney Mather, scarcely crediting them, mounted his horse, and rode from the town in the direction of the home of the Wagners, several miles from the village.

The Wagners, by hard toil, had amassed quite a deal of wealth, and their residence was, consequently, much larger and better than the abodes of their less wealthy neighbors. As young Mather approached the dwelling, an ominous silence brooded over the

place; and not a soul greeted his vision as he entered the great gate, and rode up the lawn.

He advanced; the silence became almost palpable, and when his eye fell upon the gory form of the noble white watch-dog, that lay beside the path, an icy chill of horror crept to his heart, and he quickened his animal's gait.

At the front porch he dismounted, and, picturing the horrible sight he expected to behold within the building, paused with a faint heart, afraid to enter.

While thus, with fearful heart, he stood amid desolation, a child's shout saluted his ears, and up from the cellar bounded a little girl, who ran to him with a cry of joy.

At least, little Lucy, the pet of the household, was saved!

The young man dropped the rein of his faithful steed, and raised the child in his arms.

"Lucy, dear little child," he said, gazing tearfully upon the wan, pale face of the little one, "tell me all."

Assured by his kind look and tears of sympathy, in her childish way she related the story of the swoop of the red hawks.

The night previous, the house was surrounded by Indians, her father slain while defending his children, and Editha carried into captivity by a chief, who spoke English remarkably well. During the melee the little narrator sought refuge in the cellar, where she was not discovered by the red marauders.

When Lucy told Volney Mather that Editha's captor called her by name, he covered his face with his hands and groaned: "My God! That man was William Hartley."

Then he entered the building, and, in the rear of his once happy home, Richard Wagner was decently buried.

Like the wind the young colonist bore Lucy to Swanzy; and that night he rode again from the village.

Once in the darkest recesses of the forest, the now thoroughly aroused and enraged young man doffed his civilized habiliments, and, to all outward appearances, became a Wampanoag warrior.

His accurate knowledge of the language and customs of his enemies, completed the deception, and, ere dawn, he fearlessly stalked into the great council-house, where the chiefs were debating their plans for continued massacre. He proclaimed himself

the forerunner of a band of northern Indians, then on their way to join their red brethren, and found himself received into unlimited confidence.

On leaden wings night seemed to approach, and when its last and darkest shadow fell upon the Wampanoags' camp, the stranger runner left his lodge, and glided away among the dying fires.

During the day he had discovered Editha's prison, and, intent upon the freedom of the sorrowing captive, he stealthily approached it.

Before the heavy bark door lay the stalwart form of a sleeping and hideously painted savage, over whom the rescuer stepped, and entered the lodge.

Editha Wagner slept not. Grief kept her lids unclosed, and in silence she brooded over her situation, and the fate she felt was in store for her.

She sprung to her feet when her disguised lover's form loomed up before her, and a shriek would have escaped her lips had he not darted to her side, and whispered her name in his well-known voice.

And now for the escape, whose very avenue seemed freighted with death.

Bidding Editha be silent, Volney lifted her in his arms, stepped over her still sleeping guards, and glided away in the gloom.

They had nearly reached the boundary of the camp, and the young colonist was congratulating Editha upon the success of his plans, when his ear caught the sound of a pursuing footstep.

He turned to calculate his peril, and confronted a savage.

"The Wampanoag is a thief," hissed the red-man. "Let him take the White Flower back to the lodge, and Talma will hold his tongue."

"Never!" cried Volney, and, drawing his tomahawk, he sent the Indian down in the throes of death.

A chilling shriek welled from the Wampanoag's throat, as he staggered backward, and, instantly, the earth seemed alive with Indians.

Seeing his peril, the colonist raised Editha from the ground, and ran forward with all his speed. Well might he run, for four hundred yelling demons were upon his track.

They hovered around his flanks, and drove him straight ahead to the precipice that crowned a turbid New England stream.

He gained the cliff a few yards in advance of his frenzied pursuers, upon whom he turned with a shout of mingled triumph and defiance.

"Do not surrender, Volney," said Editha,

not a sign of fear visible upon her beautiful face. "He would enslave me, and death at the stake would be your doom. Death, sooner than such fates!"

He kissed the tempting lips upturned to him, and told her that a leap from the cliffs might not prove their doom.

Their chance for escape was what the first numeral is to one hundred.

Horried at the colonist's bravery, the savages paused, and some drew back with horror and amazement.

Suddenly, one sprung forward.

"I know you now!" he cried, "Curse you, Volney Mather, you shall not triumph!" and his hand darted forward to snatch Editha from her lover's grasp.

But, he never accomplished his fell purpose. Volney's tomahawk crashed into his temple, and, before he could touch the earth, his avenging step-brother's hand clutched his throat, and hurled his hated body over the cliffs!

Then the Indians sprung forward; but, their hands closed on cold night-air, for the lovers had disappeared!

Far below, among the waves, their fall being broken by many boughs of trees, Volney Mather and the woman he loved struggled for life.

After superhuman efforts they reached the opposite shore, and while they passed to regain exhausted strength, a white face floated past. It was the face of William Hartley, the renegade!

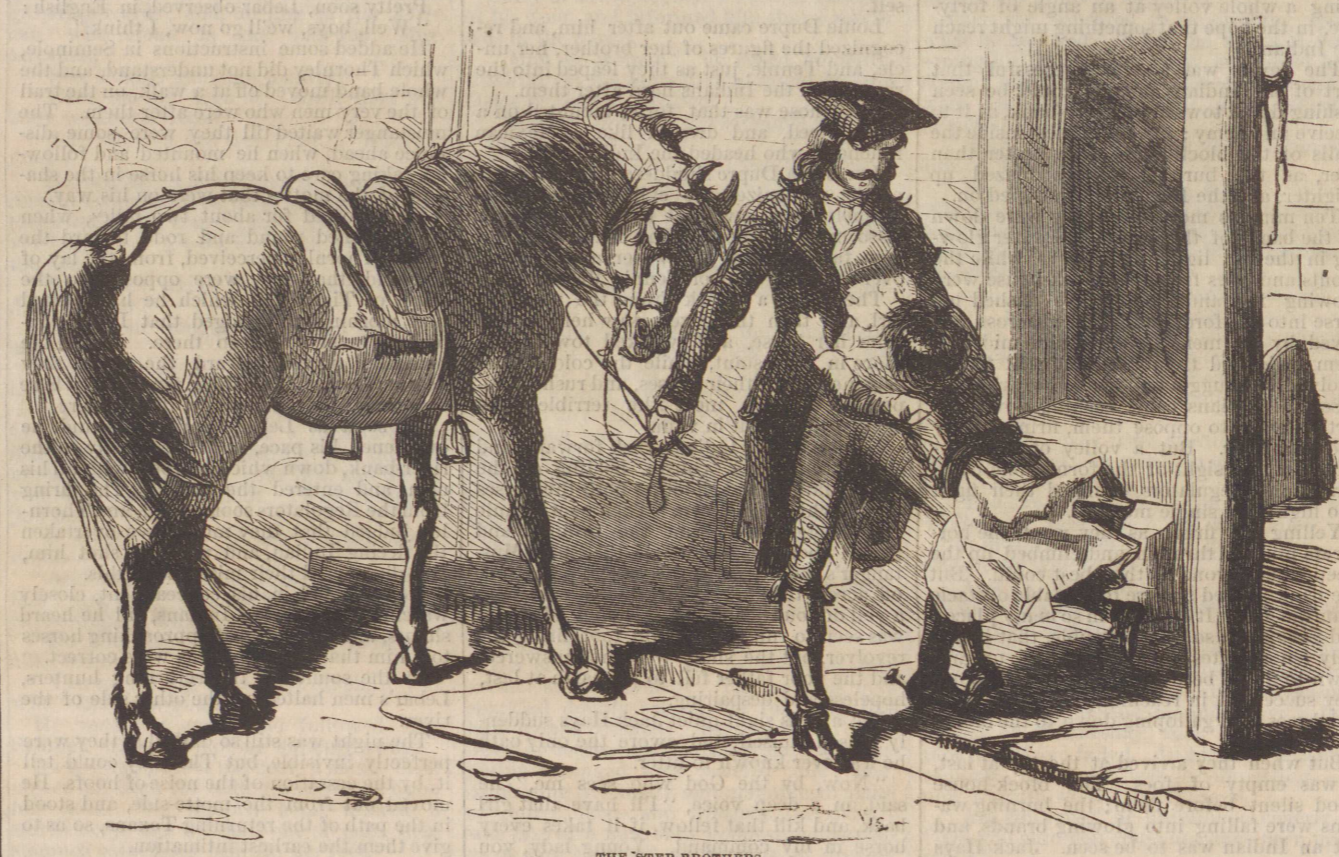
Believing the lovers dead, the Indians did not pursue; and when the simoon of bloodshed had passed over the colonies, Volney Mather took unto himself a bride, and the old Wagner house became a happy home again.

Camp-Fire Yarns.

How Rube and Billee "Slung" the Buffers.

BY RALPH RINGWOOD.

"HE-HE-HEE! Ho-ho-hoo-o!" roared Old Rube, lying back on the grass, and fairly kicking up his heels. His comrade, sworn chum, Bill Grady, had said something to him in an undertone, and straightway the old fellow had gone off almost in convulsions.



THE STEP-BROTHERS.

"Lordy, Billee, y'u'll kill this ole hoss yit!" he gasped, and then another fit supervened, that stopped his talking for fully five minutes.

Every eye, aglow with eagerness, was fixed on Rube and Grady, for they knew something rich was coming.

"Durn it all, Rube, stop yer cacklin' an' tell us what it ar!" cried one of the boys.

"What it ar! He-he-hee! What it ar! Ax Billee, he'll tell yer, fer durned ef I kin—fer larfin'!"

But he finally exhausted himself, and rose to a sitting posture.

"Boyees," said he, with sudden gravity, that was even more ludicrous than his laughing—"boyees, did enny uv yer ever tie two ole tom-cats' tails together an' sling 'em over the ole 'oman's cloze-line? Say?"

"Yes! Sartin! Menny a time!" were uttered by several of the party.

"Funny, warn't it, boyees? But did enny uv yer ever rope two buffer-bulls teta-way, and see them fout?"

"That's a durned lie!" suddenly ejaculated old Ben Tucker.

"What's a durn lie, Benny?" asked Rube, good-naturedly.

"Why, bout them buffer-bulls," said Ben. "I didn't say as I hed done it, did I? I only axed ef enny uv yer hed," replied Rube, with a wink.

"Yer lie!" snapped Ben, who sullenly turned away, and recommenced on the rib he had just toasted.

"But, boyees, it hain't no lie," continued Rube. "Me an' Billee ther did fix ther buffer-bulls! didn't we, Billee?"

"We jess did," replied that worthy.

"Yes, we did, an'—he-he-hoo-o!"—we got fixed ourselves! didn't we, Billee?"

"Nothin' else," said the trapper, gravely.

"I tell yer, boyees, it war jess the doddereddest, funniest thing ther ever these hyar ole eyes—but I'll tell yer how me an' Billee fixed the bulls."

"One't him an' me war down by the Staked Plains, lookin' aroun' an' havin' a good time pettickler, fer the buffer-bulls war es plenty es wood-lice in a Kaintuck bottom, an' es tame es a forty-year old sheep w' a bell onto him."

"What w' huntin' the critters an' dodgin' in the Comanch's, we kep' it up lively, but by-m-by ther thing got to be what ther chaps calls monotonous, an' we got thinkin' up sum plan uv havin' a leetle variety."

"One night when we war layin' in camp thinkin' 'bout how we sh'd work it, Billee ups an' axes me 'bout ther cats an' cloze-line."

"I hed a good larf over thinkin' how I done it one't, an' war standin' lookin' at 'em, all doubled up w' larfin', when the ole man skipped up behind an' knocked me clean in to ther briar-patch w' a clap-board laid on 'bout hyar, an' I ups an' tells him all about it."

"We hain't got no cats," sez Billee, 'but we ar' got buffer-bulls, an' they'll do I reckon, fer want o' better."

"At fast I thort he war jokin', but when he sed how it could be, did, I jess like to 'a busted w' on y' thinkin' how funny 't would be."

"Next mornin', airly, we war up an' gittin' redly fer the spree."

"We both picked out ther best lariats we hed, an' takin' a spar 'un along, we mounted an' put fer the peairy, whar' we see a drove the evenin' afore."

"Shore enuff ther war! A bustin' drove uv 'em, an' the ole bulls purty much terghether over by the edge uv the timmer."

"See them two ole chaps, clost alongside one 'nuther," sed Billee.

"Them's our meat," sez I, an' arter scoutin' aroun' through the timmer a bit, we kum purty nigh to whar' they war feedin'."

"Ar yer ready, Rube?" sez Billee.

"I jess ar," sez I, an' out we busted, wass'n a hurricane, an' afore ther bulls knowed whar' we war, we war alongside."

"I've got mine!" yelled Billee, a second arter I see him throw his lariat.

"Ther words warn't more'n out afore I hed my feller all fast an' tight."

"Quick, Rube! this a-way!" shouts Billee, es ther two bulls broke away runnin' side by side, jess es ef they war hitched in harness."

"I got over to whar' Billee war es soon es possible, an' handed him my lariat, which he took an' tied fast onto the r' end uv his'n, an' then drapped 'em both."

"Now fer to start 'em different ways," sez Billee, an' we begun pressin' them brutes so hard that they shied off an' started, one turnin' a leetle south'ard an' t'other more to ther east."

"When we see thet, we pulled up and waited to see ther fun."

"Lordy, boyees! I wish you on'y ked 'a seen them bulls when ther line begin ter tighten on 'em."

"Billee's bull war a leetle the biggest, an' so mine war the fast to flop over."

"Sich a beller es thet, 'ere buffer give when he struck the groun', feet upmost."

"Uv coorse, when he war down it sud-dently checked up t'other 'un, an' kerflum-mux he went, all uv a heap onto ther pe-rairy."

"While Billee's war down mine got up an' started off jess es ef ther ole devil war arter him, bellerin' at every jump, till he kum to ther end uv the rope, an' up he flew ag'in."

"Then Billee's, he got up an' started, on'y to be sarved jess es mine hed been, an' so they kep' it up, just onean' ther t'other, till both uv us, Billee an' me, war nigh about dead w' larfin'."

"Every one't in a while they'd ketch sight o' one 'nuther, an' then they'd lock horns fer a reg'lar groun'-scuffle, till one got tired, or scart, an' would start off an' ketch another tumble."

"I swar, boyees, I larted till I war blind es a bat, an' couldn't git my breath fer more'n half a hour."

"When I got up offen the grass, fer I'd fell off the hoss, I see a sight ther kinder took ther larf right outen me, I tell yer."

"Thar war Billee, standin' off 'bout twenty yard from whar' I lay, w' two big Comanch' warriors a holt uv him, an' afore I ked edzackly un'erstan' thet it war a fack, I felt my arms gruppel from behind, an' four' myself in the same fix."

"Yes, sirree! While we war larfin' at ther bulls, therimps hed stalked us, me an' Billee, two uv ther best 'uns on ther border, an' hed us fast an' tight."

"All this time the bulls war at it, an' the Injuns holdin' onto us an' larfin' fit to kill at 'em."

"Purty soon the whole band got roun' us an' begin jabberin' an' larfin', an' p'intin' at ther bulls an' then at us, an' then yowlin' wuss'n ever."

"Lordy, Rube! sez Billee, all uv a sud-dent."

"Theimps ar' a-goin' to rope us."

"An' durn me ef they warn't. An' what's more, they did."

"They fetched a lariat an' tied it roun' our necks, an' then cuttin' a lot uv musket switches, they lit in an' started us a-playin' tom-cats swung over the cloze-line."

"It makes my ole neck smart ter think about it till yit."

"Fer awhile Billee an' me tried not to hurt each other more'n possible, but by-m-by we both got mad. Me thinkin' Billee pulled harder'n necessary, an' him thinkin' I did ther same. An' then it war lively, I tell yer."

"The more we tumbled the madder we both got, an' ther madder we got ther wuss them Comanch' larfed."

"What a sight it must 'a been!"

"Us two an' the bulls playin' at ther same game."

"Twur funny fer the Injuns, monstrous

funny, I do reckon, but it war jess red blazes on us an' the bulls."

"Well, they kep' us at it till we both giv' out, an' then they untied us an' took to ther timmer, whar' they camped fer ther night."

"In coorse Billee an' me left 'em afore mornin', durned glad to do so, an' both swarin' thet we'd never sling another buffer-bull. Didn't we, Billee?"

Short Stories from History.

Female Heroism.—To men belong not all the honor of deeds of valor and heroism in arms. History is full of instances wherein women performed acts and deeds which history will not let die. This is a case in point:

When Charles the Twelfth invaded Norway, in the year 1716, the main body of his army advanced toward Christiania, whence a detachment was sent to destroy the silver works at Kongsberg. On this expedition, a party of eight hundred horsemen, commanded by Colonel Loeven, passed through a narrow defile in Harestuorden, and quartered for the night at Nordenfjord, in the neighborhood of which a small detachment of Norwegian dragoons had been stationed to watch the motions of the enemy. The Swedish commander, who put up at the paragon, soon after his arrival received information that the Norwegians were only at the distance of three miles, and altogether ignorant of his arrival. Mrs. Anna Colbioernsen, the wife of the clergyman, who was confined at the time to his bed, happened to overhear a consultation among her guests, at which it was resolved to attack the Norwegians by break of day, and then to march against Kongsberg. She immediately determined to apprise her countrymen of their danger. In the meantime the greatest attention was paid to her guests; and while she appeared wholly occupied in providing for their entertainment, improved her information. She displayed equal apparent benevolence toward the comforts of the private soldiers; and on pretext of wanting other necessities to complete their entertainment, she dispatched a servant, as it were, to procure them.

The Swedish colonel, in the meantime, inquired of Mrs. Colbioernsen the road to Stein, where he intended to station his outposts, and was completely deceived by her replies. He ordered his horses to be kept in readiness at the door; but she contrived to make the grooms intoxicated, upon which she put the horses in the stable and locked the door. Her next object was, under the plea of compassion, to obtain permission of the colonel to light a fire in the yard to comfort his men. This fire she insensibly increased to such a degree, that it served as a beacon to guide the Norwegians to the spot; for she had informed her countrymen that a fire would be a signal for them to advance. Every thing succeeded to her utmost wishes; and her address and intrepidity were rewarded by the arrival of the Norwegians at her house, without discovery. They took the Swedish colonel prisoner, and either cut to pieces, or put to flight, the whole of his party; upon which they sat down to the entertainment which Mrs. Colbioernsen had provided for their enemies.

The next morning she went out, in company with another female, to view the field of battle. The Swedes, who had fled during the night, in the mean time rallied, and being still superior in numbers to the Norwegians, they resolved to attack them; but being ignorant of the force of the enemy, they sent out a reconnoitering party; who in falling in with Mrs. Colbioernsen, the corporal rode up to her, and pointing his carbine to her breast, demanded instant information as to the position and numbers of the Norwegians. Her companion started away; but Mrs. Colbioernsen boldly asked, "Is it the order of your king to shoot old women?" The corporal, abashed, removed his carbine, but persisted in his first question. "As to their numbers," she replied, "that you may easily find out, as they are at this moment mustering behind the church, in order to pursue you. More I can not tell you, not having counted them; but this I know, they are as numerous as the bees in a hive." Relying upon this intelligence, the party returned to their countrymen, who fled in all directions; and such was their confusion and disorder, that many were taken by the natives, and many lost in the forests.

An Augsburg journal gives a singular account of the heroism and presence of mind displayed by the daughter of a gamekeeper, residing in a solitary house, near Welheim. Her father and the rest of the family had gone to church, when there appeared at the door an old man, apparently half-dead with cold. Feeling for his situation, she let him in, and went to the kitchen to prepare him some soup. Through a window which communicated from the room in which she had left him with the kitchen, she perceived that he had dropped the beard he wore when he entered; and that he now appeared a robust man; and that he was pacing the chamber with a poniard in his hand. Finding no mode of escape, she armed herself with a chopper in one hand and the boiling soup in the other, and entering the room where he was, first threw the soup in his face, and then struck him a blow with the hatchet on his neck, which brought him to the ground senseless. At this moment a fresh knock at the door occasioned her to look out of an upper window, when she saw a strange hunter, who demanded admittance, and, on her refusal, threatened to break open the door; she immediately got her father's gun, and, as he was proceeding to put his threat into execution, she shot him through the right shoulder, on which he made his way back to the forest. Half an hour after, a third person came, and asked after an old man who must have passed that way. She said she knew nothing of him; and, after useless menaces, if she did not open the door, he also proceeded to break it in, when she shot him dead on the spot. The excitement of her courage being now at an end, her spirits began to sink, and she fired shots and screamed from the windows, until some gens d'armes were attracted to the house, but nothing would induce her to open the door until the return of her father from church.

A Lacedaemonian mother had five sons in a battle that was fought near Sparta, and, seeing a soldier that had left the scene of action, eagerly inquired of him how affairs went on? "All your five sons are slain," said he. "Unhappy wretch!" replied the woman, "I ask thee not of what concerns my children, but of what concerns my country."

"As to that, all is well," said the soldier. "Then," said she, "let them mourn that are miserable; my country is prosperous, and I am happy."